

From the shipping
Master to the
of A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I. J. K. L. M. N. O. P. Q. R. S. T. U. V. W. X. Y. Z.

A Bright
STARRE,
Leading to, & Centering
in, Christ our perfection.

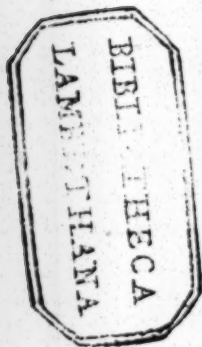
Or a Manuell, entituled by the
Authour thereof,

*The third part of the Rule
of Perfection.*

Wherein such profound Mysteries
are revealed, such mysterious imperfections
discovered, with their perfect cures prescribed,
as have not been by any before published
in the English Tongue: faithfully translated
for the common good

*For hee that is entered into his rest, hee
also hath ceased from his owne workes as
God tid from his. Heb. 4. 10.*

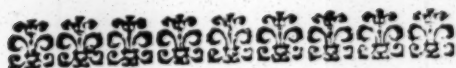
London, printed by M. S. and are
to be sold by Henry Overton in Popes-
Head Alley. 1646.



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The Epistle to the Reader.

Christian Reader,



S in the world all men are not of an equall height and stature of body, but some taller, some shorter; some weaker, some stronger: so neither are all of one iust & even proportion in spirituall light & strength of faith in the kingdome of Christ, some are dwarfs of Zacheus his pitch, some againe of Saul's port, taller by the head and shoulders then his brethren; so, the Kingdome of Christ; some are babes, some are children, some are young men, some are Fathers, every one according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Therefore that the bruised reede may not be broken, nor the smoaking flaxe quenched till iudgement bee brought forth to victorie, there must not new wine bee put into old bottles, nor new cloth patcht to old garments, neither yet must either bee neglected, but both carefully preserved by the sating of each to other; for that pur-

The Epistle

pose the scribe instructed unto the king-
dome of heaven hath in his treasury things
new and old; not onely old, nor onely new;
but old and new, able to fit each size, and to
sute to each capacity; not onely beating one
base, nor harping blindly on one string, nor
ever puzzling about the first rudiments, and
foundations of the Doctrines of Christ,
stinting the progresse of them to perfection
by tying them to one forme, and keeping
them to one lesson, being either unable or
unskilfull to top up the work, and to bring
Israel not onely out of Egypt over the red
sea through the barren Desert and serpent-
biting wilderness: over Jordan into Cana-
an, but there to give them a Sabbath of
rest and cessation from all their troubles,
going on from strength to strength, from
faith to faith, from light to light, sorting
his dispensations to the sutable capacities
of all sorts, that none may goe empty away
driving gently the tender little ones & the
females great with young, bearing also an
suckling the infant helpelesse babes in th
warne bosome of the spirit of tender love
giving milke to babes and strong meate to
men able to digest the same, their wits be-
ing exercised to discern both between good
and evill.

to the Reader.

The waters issuing from under the threshold of the Temple at the first thousand paces measuring were but to the ankles, hallow for children, at the second casting of the line it was to the knee, thence to the chin, and at the last unpassable; shewing the varieties of sweetest delights and soul-solacing comforts adapted and squared forth for every degree, stooping to the meanest capacity, yet not there leaving them where it finles them, but training & trading them along till it hath brought them to the profound depths where the vessels of greatest capacity may store as the arke on the top of the Deepe.

I having therefore observed the ever to be bewailed non-proficiency of many ingenious spirits, who through the policie of others, and the too too much modesty and timidity of themselves, have precluded the way of progresse to the top and pitch of rest and perfection against themselves, as being altogether unattainable, and have shortned he cut with a Non datur ultra, and are become such who are ever learning, but never come to the knowledge of the truth: notwithstanding that no lesse true then old saying, Not to goe forward is to goe backward. Poore soules after many yeares tra-

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pose the scribe instructed unto the kingdome of heaven hath in his treasury things new and old; not onely old, nor onely new, but old and new, able to fit each size, and to sute to each capacity; not onely beating one base, nor harping blindly on one string, nor ever puzzling about the first rudiments, and foundations of the Doctrines of Christ, stinting the progresse of them to perfection by tying them to one forme, and keeping them to one lesson, being either unable or unskilfull to top up the work, and to bring Israel not onely out of Egypt over the red sea through the barren Desert and serpent-biting wilderness over Jordan into Canaan, but there to give them a Sabbath of rest and cessation from all their troubles, going on from strength to strength, from faith to faith, from light to light, sorting his dispensations to the sutable capacities of all sorts, that none may goe empty away, driving gently the tender little ones & the females great with young, bearing also and suckling the infant helpleffe babes in the warme bosome of the spirit of tender love giving milke to babes and strong meate to men able to digest the same, their wits being exercised to discern both between good and evill.

to the Reader.

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well being found in the same place, going the same pace without fruit, as if they had reacht the highest at the first, and that there were not yet more excellent things, heighths, lengths, breadths, depths of sweetneses and fulnesses beyond measure in the Abyſſe of the Divine Viſion.

That therefore the brightest Sun might not be clouded, and the cleereſt glory vailed from the eyes of poore ſuiters; I have been induced to attempt the publiſhing of this moſt excellent and ſpiritual piece of incomparable price to the uſe and view of the more common and vulgar people in their own Mother tongue, not doubting but the light breaking forth, it ſhall finde entertainment, and leade and cauſe to grow up as calves in the ſtall.

It's true, the argument is perfection, high, hard, and indeede almoſt unheard of amongſt us, though the Apoſtles praſtice in himſelfe, Phil. 3. 14. and 15. and precept unto the Hebrewes cap. 6. 1. all things ſend to perfection, groane after perfection, are at reſt in perfection, and are reſtleſſe till perfection.

And truly the method is ſo orderly, the arguments ſo convincing, and the experience thereof ſo inſenſibly penetrating the
ſecret

to the Reader.

secrets and inwards, that I doubt not but upon the due and serious consideration hereof, many shal fall downe and say, Surely the Lord is in it, or as Jacob, Surely the Lord is and was in this, though I knew it not; but I must admonish thee that this is the third and last part of The rule of Perfection, and therefore beginnes where they end; this is as the uppermost step in Jacobs Ladder, this end reacheth into the heavens, as the other hath it's foot fastened on the earth, this is the top of our ascent to God, the other the lowest of his descent to us.

The first is called the exterior will consisting in all practices and exercises of the outward man in full latitude to the law of God.

The second is called the interior will containing of, and consisting in contemplation and sweetest meditation of the inner man, whereby the soule hath delicious touches and tastes, amorous imbraces and twinings of armes with her love, yet is this but the act and image of the soule being so farre below and short of God and his reall possession, as the image is short of God, and imagination short of fruition.

The third is called essentiall will, which is ever practised in the life supereminent

The Epistle

where not man but God acts, In us, an' tis
and all other beings as false are annihilat-
ed by him, then, and there alone is God all
in all.

This first, second, and third part may be
compared to the outward, inward and in-
most Temple; all might enter the first court,
so must all enter the first part, the practi-
all obedience of the outward man; none
but the Priests might enter the inner, so
none but those that are made Priests and
Kings to God can enter the second part,
which is the interior will practised in
spirituall and Divine meditations. Into
the third none entered but the High Priest
Jesus Christ, so none can enter into this life
superminent but those who are annointed
with the unction of God, having Christ
formed in them, an' having such a high
Priest have boldnesse of accesse to the
things within the vaile.

Now, as none could enter the Holy of ho-
lies, passing over the first & second Temple,
but must pace, trace, an' passe step by step
from one end to the other of the outward
or outward Temple, before they could ap-
proach the inmost: so none can make escape
to this third Will, but he who hath made
due progresse foote by foot through the o-
bedience

to the Reader.

bedience of the exterior will, and contemplation of the interior, except it be by rapture. And as at the last the vaile of the Temple was rent in twain which was the partition-wall, that so all might see the Ark, Mercy-seate, &c. and nothing be hid from their eyes: so, although whilst we are in the outer, we are not in the inner, whilst we are in the inner, we are not in the inmost Temple or will of God: yet they leade so one to the other, that they leave not untill they come to the inmost of all. And as the three Courts were but one Temple distinguished into Courts, so these three are but one will distinguished into outer, inner, and intimate. It's possible, Reader, thou shouldst expect something in commendation of this Treatise, but it is of age to speake for it selfe, and is licensed by the most learned and judicious. Againe, wisdom is justified of her children: Truth needs no praise of men: thou must remember the Author was a man, and Elias the man is subject to infirmities, his heavenly treasure is in an earthly vessel, thou shouldst doe well to try the spirits, and from within to approve or reprove. To me I confess he speaks divinely, and on this subject second to none; but mine eyes are not thine: its in
God

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Gods light alone that thou and I shall see light. Only Reader let me leave this with thee, this Treatise, search it and discover it, such subtile, secret, thin, spirituall, and almost indiscernible imperfections, with cures unto each of them applyed, that what thou hast most of all admired as most excellent, endeavoured after as most worthy, and rested in as most happy, that I say hee shall in the strength of God strip thee of and shame thee with.

Remember also that the perfection hee here drives at, is an uncreated perfection not to be sought for or found in the acts, thoughts, minde or will of man, acting, doing and being something, though never so heavenly: for these shall never be found the best perfections, having their imperfections: but this is a passive perfection, wherein we ceasing to be of our selves, God onely now is being, doing and working, drawing forth his beauty in us, and putting his glory on us, that man might have wherein to glory, not in himselfe, but in the Lord: and this shall be done to him whom the Lord will honour.

I intend it for experienced Christians who shall be able to set to their seale that God is true. And thus not doubting the

to the Reader.

good successe hereof amongst the children
of light, the taught of God, who run and
reade the hidden and deepe things of Gods
I recommend both it and thee to the
word of God and his grace in the face
of the Lord Jesus Christ, being
thine assured in the unity of
the spirit, and bond
of love.

Giles Randall.

THE



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the crosse, and both knowne to make
but one person, wee should aspire no
higher, then the crosse of Christ pag
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THE
THIRD PART

of the Rule of

PERFECTION;

Of the Essentiall Will of
God practis'd in the
Life Supereminent.

CHAP. I.

That the Essentiall Will of God differs nothing from God. The difference betwixt it and the Interiour Will.



Now having finisht what
wee had to say of the two
first parts, Exterior and
Interiour, compriling the
Lives Active and Contemplative,

B

wee

wee come to the third part pertaining to the Essentiall Will and containing the Supereminent Life.

This Essentiall Will is all Spirit and Life, cleare, abstract and pure of it selfe; denuded and unclothed of all formes of all Creatures bodily or spirituall, subiect to time, or Eternall. Nor is it apprehended by any sense, Judgment or Reason of Man, but it transcends all humane conceit and capacity, inasmuch as 'tis nothing distinct from God himselfe; and is neither a thing separated from God, nor a thing conjoyned or united with him, but precisely God himselfe and his owne true Being.

For, whereas this Will is in God; it followes that it is God because in God is nothing which is not God.

For, if in God were found any thing

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thing which were not God, then were there some imperfection in him; since (without exception) all things are imperfect which are any wayes distinct from him. But, such a difference betwixt his Being and his Wil, would leave him very imperfect: for, then hee could not be a simple Being and pure Act, which all the Fathers affirme he is: but must admit Composition attended with many Defects. For, so he should have somewhat in one part, which in another hee wanted, nor could hee have all in every part. He should possesse some perfection in one part, whereof he were destitute in another. And so could he not be infinite in all kind of perfection. Yea, he were bereaved of his divine Nature, if his Wil were separated from his Being; because he should then be concluded finite in both: For, where his Will

4 *The Essentiall will of God*

begun, there should his Being end, and there should his Will end where his Being begun : Both because he should be concluded finite; If finite, limited ; if limited, created ; if created, a creature , but not a Creator and God : And againe, because if he were limited, hee must needs be limited by somewhat. But if any have limited him, then is there some greater then he : And consequently , he cannot be called God , then whom a greater is found.

Furthermore, if his Will could be separated from his Being, by whom shall we imagine such separation to be made ? Not by the Creature ; for it could not : Not by the Creator, for he would not. The Creature could not ; for, there was no such : God would not, because in each part of him he loved himselfe alike. If you say they were separated

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separated from the Beginning; you make two Gods from the Beginning. If by and by after the Beginning, that crosses Reason, and cannot be: since the Alone-God inasmuch as he is one, he cannot be separated; no more then being one, inasmuch as he is One, he cannot be divided. And if we may behold the very creatures, as Fire and Water, whose nature is no more than a beame or sparke of the perfection of this Divine Nature, so to maintaine themselves in their Unitie and Intirenesse, as not only not to separate themselves, but also being separated, to reunite and incorporate; How much more then must we grant that perfection of Unity to that Nature which natures all these? But, let us grant that this Nature can be separated, and that it hath indeede so come to passe; neither of them can bee God:

6 *The Essentiall will of God*

because neither of them is infinite: forasmuch as Infinite admits no second.

But to what purpose doe I alledge so many reasons to prove so palpable and known a Truth, as that Gods Will is God himselfe: when the generall Consent of all the Fathers witnesseth the same: whereupon saith Saint Hilary, God, who is Light, subsists not of Compounds: Nor, who is strength, is held together of weake parts: Nor, who is Light, is made up of obscure pieces; Nor who is Spirit, is framed of unequals: All that is in him, is One: So that his Will which is in him is himselfe, and is his Being or Essence. For whatsoever he hath, is every way the same that he is. Also, the Master of the Sentences. The simplicity and purity of this Being is such, That there is not any thing in it, which is not

it

it : but hee that hath , and that which is had, are the same. Again, the other saith , God is not of Compounds as Man , so that in him that which is had should bee one thing, and he that hath it another. But , all is Life and Nature, viz. perfect and Infinite , and not composed of parts different, but it selfe living through the whole. And *Boetius* upon the same saith, This is truly One, in whom can be no number , nor other thing in it, but that which is it , neither any thing subject to it. Saint *Augustine* also saith : In the Substance of God, there is not another thing which is not Substance, as if there Substance were one thing, and accident another ; but whatsoever can there be understood , is Substance. But, these things may easily be said and leaved ; but without a pure heart they can never be scene. And in a-

another place. So is had in the Nature of every one of the three, that he which hath is that which hee hath as an unchangeable and simple Substance. Whereupon *Isidorus* saith : God is simple, whether in not losing what hee hath, or because he hath not one thing which is not hee, and another which is in him. All which Authorities do largely prove that the Will of God is God himselfe. Even the same simple and sole Being with him.

Wherefore, first of all I admonish the Reader in his seeking and contemplating of this Essentiall Will, not to have recourse to any Images, formes, or figures, how subtil or spritely soever. But contrariwise, leaving them all, as unworthy of this Will, and altogether opposite thereto; let him behold the same as in it selfe it is, even the Being of God far transcending

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ding all created things, and also himselfe. Againe, I desire that this point be carefully observed, because the perverse habit of our understanding which cannot behold the same without some form, makes this error familiar.

Note also, that the two precedent Wils are to be drawn and reduc'd to this whereof we now treat; And all our actions, outward and inward, bodily and spirituall, to be perfected in this Will. 1. viz. To wit or that is to say, In the unity of the Divine Being, without any backsliding at all. And if this word [Will] seeme to stumble any man, by raising some Image, or bringing to minde some other Object, then may he at his pleasure let it fall, and hold fast the word [Being] or [God,] though indeed not so much matter need bee made of the word, as for the simplification

10 *The Essential wil of God, &c.*

of the minde, which in these three words, Will, Being, God, discerns one and the same thing.

Now, betwixt the Interiour and Essentiall Will is this difference. The one goes before, the other follows. The one is the mean, the other the end. The one interiour, the other intimate: the one unitive, the other transformative. The one almost essentiall, the other altogether. The one hath certaine Images, yet very subtil: the other is pure, naked, and without all forms. In the one the soul yet moves somewhat, in the other shee's at perfect Rest. In the one shee's active, in the other passive, as receiving the influence and intimate operation of her Bride-groome. And as the Interiour arises from the Exterior, so the Essentiall arises out of the Interiour.

CHAP. II.

*That this Essentiall-Will may not
be come to, by any meane of Man : with
Reasons assuring the same.*

HAVING now understood the Nature, perfection, & height of this Will, it followes that wee prescribe a mean to attaine thereto. A meane I say, without meane. For, 'tis impossible that any act, meditation, thinking, aspiring or working can bee of sufficient force thereto. No discourse, exercise nor Rule, nor any meane to bee here enterposed betwixt God and the Soule : But even this onely End without any meane to draw us to it, and raise us to the blessed vision and contemplation thereof. And this accordeth wick St. Bon. who saith, that here the highest speculation of all others, as that of the Trinity by St. Dyon. is to bee left :
Not,

Not, that the same is not good and excellent, but because there is another more supreme apprehension in the mind of Man, by which only the highest spirit is most wonderfully arrived in the Eye of the understanding must be strongly borne downe, because in this Contemplation 'twill alwaies apprehend that which the affection tends to: whence it is that the greatest stay in our Rising is the strong-cleaving of the understanding to the Desire, the which must nethelasse be strongly borne downe, because it conceits either phantastically, circumscriptibly or in some limited manner. And still as much as in this Rising the understanding mixes it selfe with the desire; so much impurity is there. And againe, as far as the eye of the understanding is blindfolded (which will not be done without hard practise and labour:)

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bour :) so much is the eye of the
desire in her reach mounted more
freely and eminently without com-
pare. And now, the desire is to
forsake all consideration and love
of sensibles, also the beholding of
all Intelligibles, and rise up pure
without admixttion of the under-
standing to that satisfyer of her
longing whom in her extent shee
knowes, that she may bee the more
intimately united to him. For,
since this being is plainly super-
naturall, it falls not within the
bounds of sense or understanding,
surpassing mans capacity it cannot
bee comprehended. 'Tis not laid
hold on but without us ; but,
when we bend to any yearnings or
acts whatsoever, we remaine with-
in our selves. 'Tis not receiv'd but
when Man suffers : But the Soule
producing acts is agent. This be-
ing is above us, but our owne acts
below

below us. And therefore saith St. Bon. wee are here to deist from all naturall incurvation and perception. All thinking in operation how spritely soever it be, is lesse then wee. But this being is greater.

The double looke is quickly gone;

The single eye stands fixt in one.

He therefore that stoops to the Creature, I meane to any Meane, act, or operation perceives not the Creator. That this being may bee received, it onely must be minded; but intellectuall discourses glide us away. 'Tis then only comprehended when it comprehends and possessees us, which befalls not so long as wee are entangled in our owne thinkings, acts and workings. 'Tis most simple, therefore unconceivable to any other but a throughly refined understanding. No searching knowledge is able to transforme; This is the office

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sice of Love onely. So often as the senses or understanding are distracted about any working, the soule is also posted to the same object, and must needs consequently bee writhen & bended below her selfe, and cannot therefore flye above her selfe.

And thus 'tis evident that in this matter, no helpe of any Mean of Man is to be sought: Nor is it once to be thought that this Being may be approached by any Reason or discourse of the Understanding: but contrariwise, such discourses & acts are to be utterly abandoned, and all working of the Understanding, to be strongly held below, as *Dion* to *Timothy*: See (saith hee) that in rising to mystical Visions, viz. The Divine Being, thou forsake thy wits by a strong contrition and all workings of thy understanding, and all knowables and invinibles; and

and arise as unknowingly as may be possible to the Vision of him which transcends all substance and knowledge.

I therefore conclude: That since all aspirings, meditations and discourses are here of no use, and since the wit, judgement, and reason of Man must fall before the Divine Glory; And since all acts and workings of the Understanding are to be forsaken; I conclude I say, that no humane or active Meane may be found to attaine thereto.

This Being can no otherwise be comprehended then as it gives it selfe to be comprehended: Nor otherwise understood then as it opens it selfe to be understood: Nor be seen in any other manner then as it gives it selfe to be seene: Nor be tasted, knowne, possessed, but as it gives it selfe to be tasted, knowne, and possessed. It suffers it

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selfe to be comprehended, when, how, and by whom it pleaseth. It offers it selfe to be understood, tasked and enjoyed, when, how, and by whom it lusteth. But our intellectuall powers are unusefull and good for nothing.

CHAP. 3.

Of the first Mean.

*A Mean to be found without a Meane :
Passive, not Active, nor consisting in
Acts of the Minde. And the same
two-fold.*

Although as we have shewed
no meane of Man is of sufficient power to attain the Vision of this Being; yet a divine Mean may be found able to compass the same: And though not Active or Actual, wherein Man may doe somewhat; yet passive or essentiall, wherein Man doing nothing, suffers. By reason of which resting from action

on I call it a Meane without Meane; For, as thereby 'tis granted us to attaine our highest felicity, and therefore it may be rightly termed a Meane; So, inasmuch as all workings of the Minde are therein to be forsaken, 'tis without Meane, since all Meane requires such workings. Or rather you may call it a divine (and not humane) Meane because there the Spirit of God does all, the humane nothing. God only does; the soule only suffers. And so shee is immediately united to God without any Meane (as say the Fathers.) The Head of our Spirit is that Understanding which in the Saints is immediately united to God. That rising which is called [by unknowing] is no other than an immediate motion through flames of Love, without all glasse of the Creature, without forethinking; also without motion of the

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Understanding, that the desire alone may touch ; and the searching knowledge in the Actuall exercise, know nothing thereof.

Now to close all in a word: This Meane shall be no other, then even the Continuation of the same Will by constant pursuing it without stay, and by persevering in the tract or course thereof, already knowne and tasted in the Interior Will, till it bring us into the Essentiall. And so, (as we have promised) it shall appeare how this sole point of the Divine Will contains the whole spiritual life from the very first Rudiments of the Affective to the spire of the Contemplative and supereminent, without any need to turne aside from it, to forsake or inchange it, forasmuch as in it selfe alone, it stands for the true Beginning, most perfect end, and happy Meane.

And

And this Continuation may be had two wayes. 1. By the naked Influence, sweete operation, and most intimate Inaction of this alone VVill, by the which it annihilates all the acts of the soule, simplifying and supping her up in it selfe. The other Meane stays not upon this working alone, but also superadds some curious sleights on our part; Not that the same be exercised in Acts of the Minde; for so far is it from that, that quite contrary, they wait to hold down all workings and to keepe her naked: Of which Means the first is more proper and agreeing onely (or at least chiefly) with those who have been trained up in this worke. The other lyes more open, not looking on these only, but extending it selfe also to others who have not walked in this way, but in some other, and yet have not reached

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reacht this eminent degree and blessed end ; The one pertaines to those that have relisht this Interiour Will and the Lure thereof ; The other suites no lesse with these then with those others who never had any experiment of the same. The one is theirs , on whom the ayre of fervour and devotion blowes ; The other is for those also who have only an intellectuall Devotion. The one is not alway so certaine : the other perpetually secure. In the one this Will by sugred influences and familiar Allurements adornes the soul : In the other, the Bride-groome seemes at first to stand aloofe and let her adorne her selfe. In the one is found a certaine sensible Devotion flowing from the knowing powers : But in the other (especially in the Beginning) shee mounts above al, both wit and underitanding ; And there

there is God seene, and by naked love held and enjoyed. Though for all this, in conclusion these two wayes fall into one, leade to the same end, and are tasted in the same manner.

Let every one therefore take to himselfe which of these 2 Meanes he findes allotted him; and not intangle himselfe in both at once: of which the second is perfecter in the Act Annihilation.

CHAP. IIII.

The first Point.

Four principall points of the first Meane, with a Declaration of the first

THe first Meane containes four points, by which the tract of this Will is followed, and being insisted in is prosperously finished and spent in the Essentiall. The

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first whereof is a secret blush at the Imperfection of her Eyesight. The second, a flowing of the burning desires into God. The third, a perfect Denudation of the Spirit. The fourth, an everlasting present-ness and instant full vision of this object and most blessed end.

For the first, most certainly, there is no contēplation so elevate, but may yet bee raised higher: no thought so abstract, but may yet bee more abstracted: No light so multiplyed, but may yet grow lightlomer: No pull so violent, but ther's yet further to goe: No conversion so simple, but it may yet be more simplified: Nor lastly any union so close, but may yet be made closer. Yet, that it can bee so and yet is not so, is to be imputed to us and our defect, not unto God who desires no other thing, nor can but infinitely desire to communicate himselfe.

All

24 *Subtilest imperfections are*

All our Contemplation then hath some cloud; All our Abstractions, some concrete Image. All our light, intermixed darkenes. All our Attractions, some Retraction; All our conversions, some turning away; All our Vnions, some partition [how perfect soever they be,] and that through our owne defect. But because the finest of our Imperfections bee, the more they passe undiscerned and uncorrected: Therefore, these failings being most secret and impalpable are feldome or never discovered much lesse smoothed with the lat file.

Where is to be noted, that the purer and more illuminate the Minde is, the more curious and invisible are also her deceptions; for else shee would discern and know them. But in this supereminent light the Minde is far away most refined

and highly illuminate : It followes therefore that her deceptions be also secret and hidden. *Ergo*, they be strongly deluded, who in this life weigh their spots and blemishes in the same, and no tickler ballance then in the other Lives : Not minding that in what measure the mind grows in purity, in the same measure also Nature more closely seeks her selfe. And although these Imperfections seeme small, yet bring they no small disadvantage : since herein Contemplation the smallest print of Knowing, the least working of the Wits, Image how abstract soever (the Passion excepted) and the shortest distraction that can possibly be conceived, doe stop the high flight, and the enlarging or out-spreading of the Minde : Yea even the smallest Inmortification, Affection, or search of Nature, clogs the most high spritely rising.

C

Wherefore

Wherefore they erre very much who in this Life doe swallow and passe by lightly all these Imperfections as if still they were conversant in the Active Life, not employing their talent, light and cleanness of spirit faithfully to the rooting out of all other defects, but conniving & closely flattering themselves, deny the same to be any blemishes, and so arrogate to themselves too much liberty, and tickle and pamper their Sensuall Nature, using that great grace and purity of Minde to turne in for seeking of comfort, but not to the perfect denyall of themselves, sticking alway in their Imperfections, and playing fast and loose, now standing for the spirit, and by and by for the flesh, longing to taste spirituall and sensuall Joyes both at once, and coveting to passe all into spirit without contritition of the flesh.

Som lofty co

Sometimes also in praying, it suffices them to be deceived under a false shew of good thinking, that they trow and know that manner of Action to be holy and commended in Spirituall Life, as Aspirings and other Gestures of that kinde yeelding a Sensible Comfort. And therefore since it seems to do them so much good, they forsake not the use thereof, though in their hearts they well know that those same be great Impediments in this Life, as also all the other defects and failings which usually we meet with in our Comtemplation and Union, from which they bee never quite freed, how subtilly soever the same have winded in and hid themselves.

That therefore we may returne to our purpose, the soul how highly soever inlightned and seated in lofty contemplation, yet straighe

28 *Subtilest imperfections are*

covers here some wandrings and imperfections exceeding secret ; which blown away, shee followes her Bridegroomes Lure with a stronger Mount and swifter Motion , pursuing the threed of the Divine Wil before drawn into practise in the first and second part more essentially. And these imperfections be three.

The first is a too much boyling of the desires and fervours in the Soule, which savours too much of Action, & disturbs the sweet peace and quiet Rest of her Bridegroom in her, and crosses his sole, full, and perfect working and absolute sovereignty over her , where-through shee neither lets her selfe be perfectly illuminate, nor rises to the rosie kisses and chaste embraces of her Lover, but remains as it were written down into her selfe.

The second is a certain hidden

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thin, and unknowne Image of the Divine Will which the Soule retains, vailing her from seeing it essentially.

The third is that shee does not instantly behold her Bridegroom as really present, and more-present then her self, and more within her then her selfe, and more shee then her selfe; but as one resiant in Paradise, or some other-where more remote from her then she from her selfe: whence it was that neither so lively faith, nor so firme hope, nor so ardent Love, nor so ravishing entercourses past betweene them as otherwise should befall. Yet, look I not that she should perfectly discern all these failings till shee have reached the following degrees, because they can hardly be perceived till they be corrected by the Divine Spirit. And these three Imperfections doe directly oppose the three

30 *The hot boylings of good desires,*
following points and perfections,
handled in the three next Chap-
ters. And therefore we will treat
of them al together, that the one
may remedie the other.

The Second Point.

CHAP. 5.

*Of the too much Boyling of the Desires,
and of the flowing of the same De-
sires into God. Where is shewed a
simple and essentiall rise of the
Minde.*

TIs not my purpose by this too
much boyling of the Desires,
to reprove those sacred Desires
which in God are found in his Be-
ing, or so far forth as they be orde-
red aright, but so far as they are ill
ordered, or have some complement
annexed, which hinders their ful-
nes & perfect consummation, Deifi-
cation, free entry, spentnesse and
dying

dying in God. This hinderance is no other but the too much boyling of them. 1. Active. Active I say (exclusing the passive) which is ever still, without noise, without Acts, profound and godlike :) But the Active on the other side, impatient, unconstant, superficial, too much smelling of Man, and of the nature and operation of Man. And this twofold species of the Desires may fitly be resembled to two waters, whereof the one is muddy, bubling and full of murmur; yet but shallow : the other cleare, smooth, and still, yet extream deep. Therefore this boyling of the Desires (though good in the Beginning) is here to be rejected. Not that good desires are to be refused, but their Imperfections : Not that we should forsake them, but perfect them, nor yet lose them, but refine and fulfill them in God. For, as

seed is not lost because cast in his place, but changed and multiplied, as we see in a graine of corne, that it perisheth not though thrown into the ground, but is changed and encreased : So, neither doe good Desires perish when they be terminated in God, but are purified, multiplied, and perfected. And as the grain of corne, unlesse it first corrupt and dye, bringeth not forth Increase ; So neither doe good Desires ever take their effects. *i.* Union and Transformation, unlesse they first be exhausted, or fall sound asleep in God. Whence is that saying of our Saviour : Except a grain of corn falling into the earth, dye, *it bringeth no fruit ; But if it dye, it bringeth much fruit.* As also at first the graiue is needfull, so in the end it must needs corrupt, that wheate may grow up.

'Tis thus with good Desires and
their

their Annihillation, that they may obtaine their Union with God. But as in this corruption, the grain is improperly said to be corrupted, but rather to be altered or changed into Corne; So also wee say improperly that these good Desires are nothing; but rather changed and transformed into Union. Howbeit, as the graine is never at length returned the same, but remains for ever transformed or altered into Corne as into his effect and last end and perfection: So neither are these good Desires ever after to be begun again, but to persevere transformed into Union as into their effect and crowne of compleatnesse. Lastly, as the grain is not to be cast in every earth, nor at al times, but very carefully, both commodiousnesse of place and opportunity of season is to be observed; In like manner, good desires

are not every where to be annihilated, but in God alone: Nor yet in every exercise, but only in that of the Union: Nor yet suddenly in the beginning, but in the time allotted for that purpose, which is even after the Exercise of the Active Life well drawn into practice is accomplished. Where plainly appears how much they are blinded that thinke they must alway be doing and never rest from such fervent Acts & Yearnings; And much more they that in such manner of working imagine the true Union to be placed, and condemn the contrary for faulty, and stilnesse for nothing worth; which is flat contrary to the doctrine of *Dionysius* before cited Chap. 2. who also saith in another place, That our intellectuall workings must be cut off, that we may send in our selves so much as may be into the Super-essentiall

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essentiall Shine. But the Soul shall cure this failing and impediment in her Journey and found Union, by emptying of her fervours into God; Not that she must work any thing, but onely suffer such working.

The Emptying here of the burning Desires into God, is the exchanging of the practicke Love with the fruitive; or a finall rest and full satisfaction of the desires in God, where the Desire is swallowed up, and passes into possession. This word emptying intimates two things. 1. Death and Life: or Losse and Gaine: Because inasmuch as the Desire flowes out of the Soule, 'tis extinct and dies; but inasmuch as 'tis ended in God, it receives more Increase, and lives more then ever before. Therefore I listed not use the word Annihilation, as if they were made nothing in God;

God ; But I said Emptying of the Desires into God, because they are preserved in him. Nor did I call it a preservation of the Desires, but an Emptying ; Intimating thereby that they are not afterward felt in the soule, for that they be sublime, & also because of the lively & sweet working of God in the soule, who thus transformes the Desire into the thing desired.

Also, this change contains three things. A cleer Manifestation of the thing desired ; A full satisfaction of the Desires, and a Rest of the same.

For the first ; this Manifestation of the thing desired, which is God, comes not all at once, but successively and as it were by steps according to the Increase of our Love. For, first God abideth in the Soule, but shee knows him not. Then he declares himselfe to her ; but obscurely : Then more clearly, and

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as it were in full Noon-day ; All which steppes are exprest by the Sponse in the *Canticles*. For, first 'tis plaine by these words, *I sought him, but found him not* : where wee may see two things : One, that God was in her ; the other, Shee knew him not. Whereof the first is apparent in the words [*I sought* ;] since 'tis wel known, and *Augustine* affirms shee sought him no where without her selfe, neither could she. The other, That shee knew not that he was in her, is cleare in the words following ; *I found him not*.

The second step of this Manifestation is when God declares himselfe to be in the soule ; yet obscurely, and more by certain effects such as fervent desires and holy inspirations, then by any essentiall knowledge. The which appears in these words of the Bride, *I caught him, Nor will I let him goe*. For in saying

38 *A foure-fold manifestation*

saying *I caught him*, shee shews shee doubted not but she had him: Yet in adding [*Till I bring*] &c. shee intimates that possession was not sure enough; insinuating that her Desires were not yet filled with the Beholding and enjoying of him; but that should be when shee had brought him into her Mothers house. And this is when the Bridegroom doth not only present himselfe as a Lord, but even as a very Bridegroom; not only by whispering Inspirations, but also by secret Touches; trayning the Soule not as a Tutor by Rules, but as an affianc't Lover by amorous allurements. Yet, since this Enjoyance and Vision of her Dearest, hath not yet reacht the top of her extent, she ceases not to cry to him; Who shal give me thee my brother, sucking the Duggs of my Mother, that I may finde thee abroad and kisse thee?

The

The which at length she attains to in the third step of this Manifestation, much cleerer and excellenter then the former, and which is then ascended when as the Bridegroom drawes so neere his Bride that shee sees his very shadow, even his God-like Image, whereunder she curiously surveyes him, keepes company with, and muses on him, chusing there to set up her Rest, saying, *I sate under the shadow of him whom I loved.* There she hears him, There she adores him, There shee entertains his familiar parleyes, amorous discourses, and sugred expressions ; There shee receives the promises of Life, the token of contract and full assurance of solemnizing of the Wedding ; There shee imbosoms and kisses him ; There she gets the Jewels, Chains, and Wedding Garments.

And lastly, there she's inabled to stand

stand the Essential & spritely enter-
 courses of her Bridegroom, under
 whose shadow shee sits till the day
 dawn, and the shadows decline. Yea
 even till the Wedding day and Es-
 sentiall Vision, when that vaile or
 shadow whereunder she saw him,
 shall vanish and passe away. For
 which Wedding and happy Vision
 day shee waites with deepe sighes,
 hanging on him with undenyable
 Importunity: *Show mee thou whom
 my soule loves where thou liest in the
 Noone-day: ô my Joy! ô Center of my
 Heart! where and how I shall find thee
 ô my God, naked without vaile,
 without Image, shadow, or ob-
 scurity.*

Which lowly desire, her infla-
 med Lover not able to withstand,
 strips himself before her according
 to her wishes, letting her see him in
 a manner not only unutterable,
 but also incomprehensible.

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And this makes up the fourth step which againe is so much eminentter then all the rest, that not only they that have never proved cannot conceive it but even others that sometimes have tasted it, are not able to comprehend the Lustre thereof, since it transcends all Imagination, working of the Understanding, wit, reason and judgment of Man, because 'tis done without Man. For, as the Bridegroom humbles himselfe below himselfe: So, his Bride rebounds her selfe above her selfe, mutually meeting to celebrate the Marriage. In this step she sings, *I turned to my Beloved, and he to me*, that she might declare their Actuall Union and their Mutuall enioyance of each other in Spirit and Truth. And againe in another expression thereof she saith, *My Beloved shall lodge betweene my Breasts.*

Next

Next after this full Manifestation, follows a full Satisfaction of the Desires by necessary consequence. The more this Manifestation is encreased, the more is the desire filled; So that when the Manifestation is in her full cleernesse then is the desire compleatly satisfied. First, in that vehement longing & desire God was, though he shewed himselfe but obscurely. The more that Desire blazed, the more did God discover himselfe therein aswell because of his great Light, Glory and familiarity, as of the soules larger Capacity: So that when at length the Desire is streamed up to her highest pitch, God also opens himselfe in full perfection. Whereupon, the soule beholding him in her selfe as in a manifest Vision, hath whatsoever she can long for, and her desire is fully contented: As wee see a Vessell

Spung

Spunge that drencht in the Sea are filled to the Brim, wch when they be full, are able to hold no more; so the Desire being fulfilled and satisfied, can wish for no more. For, since 'tis true that nothing can let in more then it can containe, according to that of the Philosopher: *All that is received, is received according to the measure of the Receiver*; It followes that neither can the Desire stretch it self to wish for any more when 'tis full. For, as the receipt of a Vessell is the measure of his hollownesse; So the Capablenesse of the Desire is her Contention in desiring. And as that hollownesse once filled, the Vessell is full; So this Appetite being satisfied, the Desire can hold no more. But surely this Appetite is satisfied by the Manifestation of God in the Soule; and consequently, the Desire is filled, all particular

lar Acts being brought to a full point, and all working ended in the end. Whence necessarily arise the third point, that is, the dying of the same Desires, acts and workings, because the desire being fulfilled vanishes; and the acts & workings having reacht the Marke doe cease to bee. For, as the graine, when once it hath brought forth corn, appears no more; so these Desires, Acts and workings having tooke their effect, *i.* Fruition of God doe cease any further to be. But as the Graine though the form perishes, yet continues in substance; so also the Desires, though in form they be no more, yet live for ever in Being. And as the Graine at the end it may produce the effect must of necessity lose the form so must the Desires. And againe, the substance of the graine perishes not, but lives in the effects and continues in other

ful continues alive, ; the same befalls
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whe form perisheth, yet the substance
orne remains in water into which tis
sire melted; So though the Desires and
ool Acts vanish as touching their
Go forms, yet their being for ever per-
B severes in God, into whom they
m dissolve.

ce, And these three be the points
orm whereby a change is made of the
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ine of the Act, into the object it
eff wrought upon, *i.* The Manife-
orm station of the thing desired; the sa-
ine tisfaction of the desires, and a Rest
rile of the same Desires, &c. which
s a points doe necessarily follow each
tin other by course.

Blessed

Blessed Soule, that in her self
 proves this Manifestation, this Sa-
 tisfaction, and this Rest! Blessed
 Soule that sees her Bridegroome
 cleerly in her selfe, and is so abso-
 lutely contented with him, and
 lets all her longings and particu-
 lar Acts flow into him! But, far a-
 way most blessed Soule that in this
 Manifestation sees where and how
 he rests at Noon-day, even in Heat
 of Love and superabundance of
 brightnesse! In such a Satisfaction
 she sees her selfe rapt up and en-
 joyed by her Bridegroome, who
 so seizeth upon her, that thence-
 forth all her Mightes are expos'd to
 receive him, are hallowed to him,
 and are wasted in clipping and em-
 bracing him, till being with child
 to him, she extolls the condition
 of a Spouse ready to be delivered
 of her first borne, even as having
 conceived Jesus, as himselfe saith

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*Whoſoever doth the will of my Father,
which is in heaven, the ſame is my Mo-
ther, &c.*

In ſuch a Reſt of Deſiring ſhe is
div'd in the Infinite abyſs of the de-
ity of her ſo much long'd for, & be-
loved Bridegroom. She wants no
comelines after ſuch Manifeſtation;
no ſweetneſſe after ſuch Satisfacti-
on; Nothing can ſtay her from U-
nion after ſuch a Reſt. By this Ma-
niſeſtation ſhe ſees her ſelfe behold
her God uncloathed; by this Satis-
faction ſhee receives him into her
ſelfe, and by this Reſt, ſhee meetes
him naked.

In theſe is all Beauty ſet before
the Brides eyes, ſtounding her
with amazement. All ſweetneſſe
is infuſed into her Bowells, over-
flowing her with admirable delici-
ouſneſſe. All ſecrets are diſcloſed
to her, fixing her in aſtoniſhment.
Nothing above this Viſion, no-
thing more joyous then this ſweet-
neſſe

nesse; Nothing more arct then this
 embracement; then to behold the
 Kingly nakednes of the Divine Be-
 ing. What can possible be so lovely
 as when the soule unites her selfe
 God, opening him a Resting place
 betweene her Breasts? what wor-
 is of so high excellency and digni-
 ty as his sole delightfull and rare
 thing touches within her, she on-
 suffering his Inaction? ô what un-
 expreible glory shines in this Vi-
 on, where cleerly appears the face
 of God tru-lovingly smiling upon
 the soule? ô what Joyes does she
 taste, when all vaile blowne away
 they both chaine themselves mutu-
 ally in linckt embracements? what
 endlesse sweetenesse flowes down
 into all her faculties, when her Le-
 vers left hand supports her head
 his Right hand embracing her
 when he infuses himselfe into her
 and by lively and divine touches

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poures himselfe into her inmost bowels. None there is that can know such beauty, or conceive such sweetnesse or imagine so high rapture, but he that at some time hath had tast thereof in himselfe. Nor yet he at any other time but when he actually proves the same.

CHAP. VI.

The Third Point.

Of the perfect uncloathing of the Spirit.

UNCloathing of the Spirit is a certaine Divine working, purifying the Soule, and stripping her of all formes and Images of all things as well created as uncreated, and enabling her so naked and simplified to contemplate without helpe of formes. First, I call it a Divine working, to include all
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50 *The purifying of the soule from*

humane, since no humane working can uncloath her, because no working of Man, nor acts of his understanding can possibly bee without all forme and Image : For first necessarily they bee formed and cloathed with some Image before they be produc't. All things also worke according to the condition of their owne Nature : But all humane working is imaginative *ergo*, works by Images, and consequently can never effect this uncloathing and clearnesse from Formes. For, as one contrarie cannot produce another ; (for instance sake) Darknesse, Light, So, can neither imaginary working produce that which is free from Images, and without all forme. Yea, so far is it from this that he that thus strives most, shall finde himselfe furthest off. For as one treading on soft earth

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make it smooth, makes the same more uneven with the prints of his footing: So, hee that by his own Act takes in hand to smoothen, polish, and uncloath his soule from all Images, shall by the signes of his his owne acts adde more to those he hath already. And, as water, the more stirring it is, the further it is from calme and rest: So, the more a soule is stirred with her owne Action, the further is the distance from abstraction. And as water, the more stirring it is, to the end it may become calme and smooth, must cease from motion: So, the soule, that she may be made naked and bare, must rest from her owne working. But this standing still or resting from Action cannot bee accomplished by the soule alone with fruit and in God. For, it is the worke of the Holy Ghost, to raise and

suspend the mights of the soule, that they may cease from all naturall operation, and as it were dye in God.

Where many soules are grossely deluded, which without the raising and pull of the holy Ghost, resting from all working, doe rest indeed in a kinde of abstraction, but pure naturall and in their own spirit; yet thinking the same super-naturall, taking that false Rest to be union with God, &c.

Further, I adde, purifying the soule, and enabling her to naked & simplified, to contemplate without helpe of formes. Which words containe two effects of this uncovering thing, Purgation and Illumination. Purgation, because it strips the soule naked of all Images, and illumination, because it enableth her to discern spirituall things without helpe of any Image. Y

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all formes, a divine work. 53

(as we shall see hereafter) the object of the Humanity and passion of our sweet Saviour Jesus is never to be forsaken ; which how it may stand with the same Annihilation and uncloathing, wee shall shew hereafter.

Moreover, this uncloathing, by the first effect of Purgation, besides all other impurities doth principally cleanse the soule from one, and that a most hidden Image of the wil of God, which she alwayes retained, being the second blemish of contemplation, mentioned *cap. 4.* which Image was so impalpable and spritely, that the soule in the Inner will could never discover the same : but stood alway perswaded, that she saw this will in his owne Being, without any forme or vaile at all. Yea, nor could she ever perceive that Image, till she was cleansed thereof, there

D 3 being

being no imperfect thing imputed to him for imperfect, that knowes nothing more perfect. But the soule there knew no better, because this Image was the highest and purest that ever she saw. Whence it was that shee could never know the same for imperfect, though now she sees it to be so when she's purged of it. If any aske, How then can she winde her selfe out thereof, if shee cannot know it? Answer, That must be done by favour of Love, which is Gods owne worke, and not the soules, and which consists more in suffering then in doing. This working of the love of God is so inward mighty and powerfull, that it workes more livingly in the soule, then ever she felt before. And this pull is so violent, that it ravishes her more then ever without her selfe. This fire of Love is unquenchable, that

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it consumes all her impurities. And
hastly, so strict is this Union, that
shee is all exhausted in God, in
whom all her Imperfections be
drown'd, lost, and brought to no-
thing. And by the same worke
shee gets a new Light, and a far o-
ther Capacity then ever she had
triall of, and is thereby enabled
to worke extatically and superna-
turally, without and above her
selfe, and all her naturall and hu-
mane Understanding, wherein
stands the second effect of this un-
cloathing, Illumination: For,
here she is made drunk and giddi-
fied with such abundance of Light,
that shee is covered therewith as
with a garment, transformed in-
to it, and made one with the Light
it selfe. For, since in this most
strict union, God the fountaine
and Well-spring of this universall
inaccessible Light is more pro-
found,

found, inward, and nigh to the soule then shee to her selfe, and that in this Lovely union no secret of the Bridegroom usefull for her to know is kept from her. It followes, that this mystery full of all joy and ravishment is revealed to her, that her Bridegroom, the Eternall God is found within her. Him she beholds in her selfe, after her hearts desire, without vaile or Image, seeing him as at full noon-day, how he rests within her, as in his owne Tabernacle, exercising a sweet and familiar operation within her. And whilst shee sees, tastes, and proves how he is nearer to her then her selfe; and how she is more hee then shee is her selfe; and that she possesses him not as something, nor as her selfe, but more then all things, and more then her selfe. According to this Light shee so demeanes her selfe, that

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that all her Joy, Life, Will, Love and Sight are much rather in him then in her selfe; and that because she knowes him farre more excellent and worthy then her selfe, and hath found him more delicious and sweet then her selfe. And lastly, sees him more faire and glorious then her self. And again, having learned by prooffe that he is all things, and her selfe nothing, and that in him is all beauty, goodnessse, and pleasure, in her selfe nothing but bitternesse of evill: In him alone she stayes, in him she dwells, in him she lives, and nothing at all in her selfe. Whence it followes that shee is all in God, all to God, all for God, and all God; but nothing in her selfe, nothing to her selfe, nothing for her selfe, and nothing her selfe: She all is conversant in the Divine Will, Spirit, Light, and Power; but nothing

D 5

thing in her owne Spirit, Will, Light, and owne or naturall working. In that Power, in that Spirit, in that Light with an unmoveable eye ſhee beholdeth this Eſſentiall Will, or Divine Being, as 'tis ſaid, *In thy Light ſhall wee ſee Light* : Here ſhe diſcovers hidden and unſearchable ſecrets : Here lies her way open to Light, unacceſſible : Here ſhe unfolds unutterable Myſteries : Here ſhe viewes wonders : Here ſhe ſwims in endleſſe joyes. For, being united with God, none of theſe myſteries, ſecrets and wonders can bee kept from her. For, ſince God hath ſhewed her himſelfe, how ſhall he hide any needfull ſecret from her. And now having found within her ſelfe, the fountaine of all ſweetneſſe, and the Well-ſpring of all Pleaſures, Delights, and joyes, how ſhall ſhe but be draw-

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ned in the Sea of this spirituall
Delicioufnesse? and ingulft in the
whirling torrent of this Celesti-
all Blisse? Or how shall the abstru-
seft secrets of God be shut before
her, to whom he hath bared and
laid open his Bosome? Or how
shall his Myfteries bee sealed up
from her, to whom he hath re-
vealed himfelfe face to face? Who
indeed is a secret God.

CHAP. VII.

The fourth Point.

*Of the nearenesse or ever instant
Vision and presence of the happy-ma-
king end.*

THe fourth and last step of this
Meane followes next after
this Uncloathing of the Spirit.
i. The Propinquity or neare As-
sistance of this Being, which is
no

no other thing but the continuall
 presence or habit of Union pas-
 sing between God and the soule;
 where-through the soule being
 cloathed with God, and God with
 the soule, doe live mutually in
 themselves, without any withdraw-
 ing, back-sliding or interspace.
 For, he that dwells in Love, dwells
 in God, and God in him. Where
 the soul follows her Bridegroom
 so light and swift, so strong and
 eager, and runs after him with such
 earnestnes, thirst, and unsatiablenesse,
 clinging to him with a full
 Inclination of love and bond un-
 loosable, that they be as the body
 and the shadow, she following the
Lam whithersoever he goes, whose
 favour, sweetnesse, and lovelinesse
 have so enamoured, ravisht, and in-
 vincibly stole her away, that in the
 depth of her heart she conceives a
 horror of herself, utterly abando-
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ning all her own thoughts of her self, and all sense of sweetnes from her selfe, that she may suck in the sweetnesse of this substance, that she may eternally cast her self thereinto, and lose her selfe there, never to be found againe, resting even there, & that for the naked love of the same Being. Whence it is that she deadly hates all whatsoever brings therewith the least feeling of delight in her selfe, or casts in so much as a thought of her selfe, or that sayes shee's one, and her Bridegroom another; In whom she so exposes her selfe to be dissolved, wasted, and annihilated, together with all created things, that in comparison thereof shee disdaines to live. Here she opens her selfe, and entertaines this Being, not as a vessell receives what it holds, but as the Moon does the shine of the Sun. Here she throwe

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abroad her white and Lilly armes,
 to fold and close-inchaine her
 Lover, but much closer is shee
 embrac't and inchained by him.
 Here she enlarges all the circumfe-
 rence of her Minde to draw in this
 Infinite, but on the other side she
 feeles her selfe most ravishingly
 swallowed up in it. Nor can she
 finde what to doe to rebound the
 assault and conquest of this Love,
 but only yeeld over her selfe for-
 ever in a naked, harmlesse, and e-
 verlasting conversion and fast clea-
 ving to God, in whom she abides
 so unmoveable, that as the Apo-
 stle sayes she puts him on. For, by
 this solid looke she beholds on-
 ly him; by this simple Conversion
 shee loses all Creatures; and by
 the unchangeablenesse thereof she
 utterly forgets them all. It follows
 therefore that all her forces are
 bent upon him alone, that she un-
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derstands, loves, and ecchoes him alone, and so is absolutely cloathed with him, and transformed into him. For, as on her part the soule with all her powers lyes open to God, so also on his part God with all his Joys everlastingly infuses himselfe into her ; And the more innocently she turnes to him, the more overflowingly hee poures himselfe into her. And on the other side the more overflowingly he infuses himselfe into her, the more inflamedly she turnes to him: so that by an unexpressible entercourse of reciprocall Love, they mutually cut and intwine themselves, for ever passing away the possession of themselves to each other. Hence then, and from this Virgin-like and constant turning to God proceeds this habite of Union or continuall presence of the divine Being.

Now

Now, betweene this step, and that of Uncloathing of the Spirit is this Difference. In uncloathing we obtaine only a bare Union, but in this wee finde the custome and education of the same.

The causes of this Step of Continuation are Light and Love. For here she not only discernes God in her, but also that nothing else is in her, so that shee hath pierc't her deepe into the profundity of her owne nothing, and knowne the same so thoroughly that she plainly sees all other things also vanish away, which because they seeme to be somewhat, overclouded her with Outer Darknesse: whereunto also is annexed an assurance of the same knowledge, and a practice which is habitualiz'd by Love, so inflamed and alluring, rapturous and liquefactive, that giddy'd therewith, swinckt and dissolved

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into God, she sees all other things
passe away, consum'd and return
to nothing. Whence it is that shee
sees nothing hut God. And be-
cause the causes themselves are ha-
bituall, their effect is so too. For,
this Annihilation in this step is so
castomary in the Soul, that seeing
all brought to nothing, shee re-
maines in thought suspended in
a vast emptinesse, or nothing, in
such wise that she can neither see a-
ny thing, nor containe any thing;
no, not her selfe, when shee's
rightly therein. Which huge Va-
cuity or Emptinesse may rightly
be resembled to a faire skye cleare
without cloud, and is a certaine
God-like Light.

In this Light is also found Love
(not distinct) so coelestially war-
ming, inflaming, and burning the
soule, and that so secretly, simply,
& inwardly, that it raises no mo-
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tion to buckle this calme in the Soule, but rather she is so secretly led, and so sweetly comprehended, that she dissolves and vanishes still more and more, to the further increase of this Calme and stilnesse.

This wildernized solitarinesse of this Nothing, is that whereof the Bridegroom speaketh; *I will lead her into the Desert, and there I will speake to her heart.* And because the Infinitenesse of this Nothing is now grown familiar and habitua to her, having now by proof pierced to the ground thereof, and likewise thir Love which dissolves and transforms her into him; Hence is that their effect is also continual, i. an ever-present disposednes to this Union, or a continuall assistance and neere Vision of the Being. And thus is this last vaile Contemplation blowne away which was that the soule did not

straight

straightway behold her Bride-
groom as really present, and need-
er to her then her selfe, more
within her then her self, and more
she then her selfe, but as one sitting
in heaven or some other place fur-
ther from her then her selfe. For,
all this Imperfection is here done
away, the soule in this step see-
ing cleerely, and tasting by her
owne Experience how infinitely
more inward her Beloved is, then
she to her selfe. And by this step
of continuall and customary Uni-
on, shee ever converses with him
without doubt or wavering: so as
this Soule lives eternally in the
Light for ever with her cælestiall
Spouse. Nor can Darknesse, Death
or Devill ever hurt or come neere
her, but the Devill shall vanish
from her presence, Death shall dye
before her face. And the Darknesse
of Utter-works shall be no darke-
nesse

nesse with thee: And the Night of the Active Life shall be as light as the day (of the Contemplative Life:) As is her Darknesse, so is her Light. And this is the true Active and Contemplative Life in one, not separated (as many thinke) but conjoyned, and at the same time, this kind of Active Life being also Contemplative, her Outer works inward, her bodily, Spirituall, and her temporall eternal. Thus both making one.

Of the Second Meane.

CHAP. VIII.

That this mean is no other but the Divine Will, manifested in Annihilation, which consisteth in two points, Knowledge and Practise.

Of the first Point.

THe second Meane is more remote from Sense then the other.

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ther, and more Supernaturall naked and perfect : For, whereas the other works so nakedly and above Nature, only (or at least chiefly) when the soul is taken up without her selfe by force of the Actual pull of the Divine Will ; this workes also, when that pull is not much actual, but only virtuall. The other Mean is spritely naked and above Nature when the soule is elevated and uncloathed. This continues also naked and supernatural when one is employed in Outer actions, tangled in formes, and cumbred with businesse, changing the outward into inward, bodily into spirituall, and naturall into supernaturall by help of this Mean. Though indeed the other rightly conceived and duely practised, accomplishes the same thing, but not in open view, as shall be seen.

But here I pray that this Meane
be

70 *Nothing is but God and his will.*

be well understood. For it pertains onely to those that bee thoroughly inlightned, and are able to stand it

Now, this Meane shall be no other but the Beginning and the ending: Even this Divine will which is never to be left. And this point shall be so cleared by the other Point of Annihilation which opposes it, that so contraries set against each other may appear more clearely. That therefore we may bee united to this Essential Will, we must alway see it: And that we may alway see it, we must see nothing but it: And that we may see nothing but it, we must know nothing but it; and after this Knowledge frame our Life.

Here therefore are required two Points. 1. That we be assured that nothing is but this will. 2. That we draw this Knowledge into practice. And all the strength of this

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Nothing is but God and his will. 71

second Meane shall stand in these two Points, the which in and by this will shall be perfected and accomplished, without ever departing a haire breadth from the same.

For the first point. This Will shall shew and confirme to us that nothing is but it: And that it shall doe easily, if we consider the nature thereof. For, since it is God himselfe, it followes that nothing is but it: And that it shall doe easily and plainly if we consider the nature of it. It is God himselfe, *Ergo*, Nothing is but it. And that this Will is God himselfe, is manifested in the first Chapter. But, that nothing is but it alone, remaines now to bee proved. The which thing is so known and unquestionable, that both Reason, Philosophy, general consent of all the Fathers, as also the holy Scriptures, and examples abundantly witnesse the same.

For

For, first, Reason saith it is impossible we can be any other than Nothing, compar'd to the Divine Being that depends upon none. For, God is Infinite ; But if we were somewhat, he could not be Infinite. For, there should his Being be bounded where ours begun.

Againe, Being and Good are Convertibles. If Man therefore bee, then is Man Good : But, Man is not Good ; for none is Good but God only : Ergo, Man is not.

The Philosophers also stumbled into this Truth ; Divers of them affirming, that there is but one only true Being.

The Consent of the Fathers agrees fully here-with. For, as saith that reverend St. *Jerome*. God only is ; with whose Being, our compared is not.

The holy Scriptures give the generall voyce. For, when *Moses*

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aske of God what hee should tell
Pharaoh of him that sent him ; God
returns him this answer. Say, saith
he, *[I am]* sent me. And in the song
of Moses : See now, I only *am*. Al-
so in the Gospell. *I am* he that testi-
fie of my selfe. *I am* ; Be not afraid.
And in another place. *I am that I*
am. In all which Testimonies the
word *I am* hath a strong intend-
ment and energy. Paul also, after
he had discourit of the Majesty of
the Sonne of God, saith ; he made
himselfe of no reputation, taking upon
him the shape of a servant, and being
made into the likenesse of man, was
found in forme as a man. But, if the
Son of God in taking on the hu-
mane Nature made himselfe of no
worth, and descended to bee no-
thing, it followes that man is no-
thing.

Examples and Types hereof are
shewed us in the apprehending of

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our Lord Jesus Christ. Where hee had no sooner uttered [*I am,*] but all his enemies fell backe to the ground ; to teach us that when the Divine Being rouses it selfe, all other Beings fall downe, are nothing, and be no more.

Where five things are remarkable in that Backfal. First, That they could not goe forwards. Intimating that when God claimes his Prerogative of Infinite Being, our Being hurried and puffed up with pride can stirre no further. Secondly, they were not onely not able to go forwards, but were compell'd to fall backwards : declaring to us that when once we know the Truth, our being can not onely no more presse forwards, but must also of necessity fall backwards : Declaring to us that when once wee know the Truth : For, they fell not on the

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face, but backwards, as fallshood not onely comes not to Truth, but also flies and gives backe from it, as wax from the face of the Fire. Thirdly, they not onely fell backwards, but they fell to the ground: shewing that the divine Being, not onely forces our proud Being to shrink backe, but to fall downe to the very ground, *i.* into Not being, and All to nothing. Fourthly, Note that they were enemies, as are also all they that through insolence, will arrogate to themselves any thing of the divine Being. Fifthly, they were not onely enemies, but they strove to apprehend, bind, and manacle him, to deprive him of his power and strength, and then calling all the world to witness him not to be God, to murder him with a bloody death. All which Treasons are spiritually committed by those that ascribe

any being to themselves in presence of the Divine Being. If any now demand, What then is the Creature? I answer, 'tis no more but a meere dependance upon God. If againe you aske, What is this dependance? I answer, 'Tis such as cannot well bee exprest in words: yet by a similitude we may come to some Notion thereof. So then is the Creature to God, as the Beame to the Sun, or heat to the Fire. For, as the Beame and heat doe so absolutely owe themselves to their productive Causes, as that without their perpetuall sustentation and communicating, they cannot subsist: Even, in like manner, so omnimodous is the creatures depending on God, that without his continuall preservation they cannot endure. And as the Beam and Heat are wholly to have relation to their Causes, the Beam

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The Creature a meer dependence. 77

to the Sun, the Heat to the Fire, according to that Maxime. All being, such by participation is to have relation to Being, such by essence: So, are the Creatures to be fully reduc'd to the Creator. And consequently, as whatsoever is in the Beame and Heate so considered, is no other then Sunne and Fire it selfe: so is there nothing in the Creature which is not the Creator himselfe. And therefore as the Sun is no sooner hid, but the Beames cease to be; So, if God hide himselfe, and withdraw his hand from the Creatures, they suddenly returne to their Nothing. But, as the Beam and Heat though they containe nothing which is not Sun and Fire; yet lookt upon essentially as they are in themselves, they are not Sun and Fire, but onely a certaine dependent or a sparke of those: Right so the

Creature, though all it consists of, is God: yet considered in the own proper Nature, it is not God. If you say; that since the Creature depends upon God, 'tis consequently somewhat: I answer, that it is; and yet is nothing, just as the Beame and Heat. For, as if one looke on the Beame without the Sunne, or the Heat, or the Heate, not seeing the fire, they be; But, if he looke on the Sunne it selfe, and the fire it selfe, hee findes no Beame nor Heate any more, but whatsoever is there then is Sunne and fire: So, if you imagine the Creature without an eye on the Creator, it is; but if you behold the Creator, then the Creature ceases to be. And as the Sun drawes backe to himselfe all his Beames as certaine Raies sent out from him, recalls them to their fount, (his glorious light) sucks them up, and

nothings them: Even so the Creator ascribes and ownes the Creature to himselfe, as to the Center and Head, and in his Infinity annihilates and nothings the same. Loe there! how the Creature Imagined in it self is somewhat: but in the boundlesnesse of God, and his Infinite, is nothing: in respect whereof it ceases to bee. Because therefore we here seek God, and to approach his Infinite Being, the creature is not to be stuck at as any thing: but as lost in this boundlesse Ocean. And thus you see how God is All things, and that Nothing is but he; which makes sure the first point, *Theory*. Now to the second point, *Practise*.

CHAP. IX.

*The Practise of Annihilation.***The second Point.**

Man is the fount of all Error. Of the too much estimation of the Being of the Creatures, not occasioned so much through their owne Being, as by the darknesse of the minde of Man. Which dispelled, sinne is abolished: and that such Annihilation cannot be Active but Passive.

HAVING now found by the first Point, that nothing is but this Essentiall Will, and that it is all things: It followes that by the second point wee practise the same; *i.* live in this Annihilation of the Creatures, and Contemplation of this All: For, between the Knowledge and the practice of it, there

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there is great Difference. And indeed so much, that many have the one, but few practise the other. For many will say that nothing is but God: yet scarce a Man to be found will practise what he saith. Now, I finde no Meane to this end but the same Will without the least departure therefrom. Who so therefore will remove all impediments, and banish whatsoever can step in betwixt God and him; who so desires everlastingly to abide in the highest Contemplation of all others: And lastly, who so desires to cleave constantly to God, & closely to claspe the Cœlestiall Bridegroom: Let him first of all lay this strong foundation, and rest upon the unmoveablenesse, soundnesse, and infallible Truth thereof, That nothing is but God. And then let him follow the practise thereof, losing himselfe in this Infinite and dwelling

ing therein, beholding it with a fixt eye, and that by the Death and Annihilation of himselfe, as that which is his only enemy, the root whereon all other lets doe grow, the well-head whence they run a broad, & the fount whereout they issue. For, Things themselves are such as in the Trueth, and on the things part they be; nor more nor lesse; Nor beare they themselves in any other sort but as God created them; So that if any of them intrude their Being, and inroache upon the Being of God, and advance themselves in his place, they doe not the same of their owne accord, but through us. And therefore they ought not to perish, or be annihilated by us; nor can they if we would: But only our selves whereof we have the governance.

Againe, Because our selves, *i. our* body and soule, are of the same or-

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Sin, not man, the fount of error. 83

der that the rest be, carrying such a Being of themselves, (nor lesse nor greater) as God hath framed them: it followes that the errour of their too ~~much~~ forwardnesse, as also the errour of other Creatures, derives not the Originall from them so far forth as they be such: but the Anticipation of their Being as well as of the Being of all Creatures, upon the Being of God; proceeds of sin, darknes and ignorance. And these three, neither know how to annihilate themselves, because deprived of all Light, nor can because indowed with no power: nor will, because void of all Love: But, rather they daily encrease more and more: As also the man in whom they have set up their Standard, neither knowes, because clouded with darknesse; nor can, because feebled with infirmity; nor will, because hardned.

hardned with malice. There remaines therefore onely this Will (which is God himselfe) to accomplish this worke of Annihilation. Hee is the light that knowes the Power that can, the Love that wil destroy this sin, this darknes, & this ignorance, which being conquer'd to nothing, whatsoever middle walls they have rear'd betwixt God and us, arising from them, as from the old root, by consequent must needs fall to nothing.

Now that this same may be wrought in us by this Essential will; a certaine disposednesse thereto is required on our part, not remote, as is that of the Active life, wherein we did good, and rejected evil, in the object of the exteriour will, because God so willeth; but a meer disposednesse, such as is required in this life, wherein wee doe the
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all Will, because God is, or that
GOD may bee, live and reigne
in us, as reason requireth. For,
thereby it appears, that this dispo-
sednesse ought to tend to the to-
tall Annihilation of our selves,
that this All alone may be. And
that we may proceed to this An-
nihilation, our passions, selfe-lusts,
and the imperfect acts of our spi-
rit are to bee reduc'd to nothing,
and stilled by and in the unmove-
able contemplation of this *all*, who
by his Infinity and reall presence
extinguishes them all : (For,
neither the Body, nor soule, nor
any other Creature is to be de-
stroyed or made nothing, (the
same being utterly unlawfull)
but Sinne, darknesse, and igno-
rance :) for so long as the soule
is turned from the Creature, and
cleaves close to her Bridegroom
in

in this Being, Temptation, or Passion, and all imperfect motions of the Spirit, are littled, lose their footing and vanish on the one part; and on the other part, the infinite goodnesse of God doth so reveale it selfe to her, so seize, enlive, allure, and so wondrously unite her to himselfe, that she rests drown'd in the bottomlesse Ocean of this Infinite Being. But to let passe these grosser and more palpable passions, affections, and temptations, as sufficiently known and pertaining to the Active life: we will here addresse our discourse to those imperfect Acts, and inward ill-ordered motions of the Spirit, which in our inward house and contemplation bee so secret, tickle and fine, that they be scarce discernible; and so the dammage which the soule sustaines by them is the greater, because not discovering

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covering them, she seeks no remedy. We will therefore discover some of them with their Imperfections, with their remedies after this Rule.

CHAP. X.

Of the Impediments of this Annihilation; And of the most secret and close Imperfections of Contemplation.

THe first secret and unknowne Imperfection of this Life Supereminent, is contesting or wrestling against superfluous Cogitations and Distractions; The Reason is, because by such Contesting, those thoughts are glewed stronger and faster in the Minde: For, in as much as the Will which pursues any thing with Love or Hatred, awakes

awakes the Understanding to comprehend it, and the Memory to record it; It followes, that the more eagerly the Will is animated and beltirres it selfe against such Thoughts, the more the Understanding conceives them, renews them in the Memory, and imprints them in the Mind. 'Tis not therefore the right way to fret or wrestle against such Thoughts and Distractions. Another reason is, because the more a man so contests, the more Motions and Acts are begot in the soule, and so she is further and further from this Death and Annihilation, after this our Rule, because the more one acts, the more he is.

The Cure of this Imperfection is the Contrary; *i.* a despising of such Thoughts and Distractions, by annihilating himselfe in this Abyss of Light and Life. Wherein him-
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selfe falling to nothing, those thoughts also do consequently vanish. All that Infinite which annihilates the Man, drownes also his Distractions: Nor need he care whether hee feele or not feele such Thoughts, but even abide stable and fixt in his Nothing, and resign the Battel to his All, *i.* to this Essentiall Will his God. And this way of proceeding (I say not of fighting) is to be continued against all kinde of Temptations in this Life Supereminent.

Another Imperfection is to tye the Minde to some particular exercise, counting it needfull to end such or such a thing, before it suffer it selfe to be raised higher. The reason is, because thereby he makes that bond bring both him and that exercise in subjection thereto. And thus hee lets goe his freedome, so that he cannot lay downe himselfe
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all into the hands of the Bride
groome, nor follow his Lare, nor
nakedly uncloath himfelfe: which
yet he muſt doe, if he will attain
to ſee and fully receive him into
his Soule. And laſtly, in this Sco
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ſting Annihilation, without which
Transformation can never be ob
tained.

It behoves therefore to ſtand free
from ſuch particularity of exerci
ſes, that (without Let) that Infinite
All may draw, ſuck up, and anni
hilate, and thus transform us into
himfelfe.

Here alſo wee exclude as imper
fect, the retaining of any forms or
Images how ſimply ſoever, either of
the Divine Will, Deity, Power,
Wiſedome, goodneſſe, yea of the
Unity, Trinity, or Divine Being
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Whence saith *Bon.* there is no thin-
king things of the Creatures, nor
of Angels, nor of the Trinity, be-
cause this Wisedome hath her as-
cent in the flame of Desire, and not
by foregoing Meditation. But here
we alwayes except the Image of the
sacred Passion of Jesus Christ,
which I would might everlastingly
be placed before the eyes of the soul,
and that as the Crowne of all per-
fection. Where, in this Image,
Uncloathednesse; In this Body,
Spirit: In this Man, God; at one
simple sight (not severed as in the
Vulgar way) gives himselfe to bee
seene. A thing incomprehensible to
our Reason, as also his Incarna-
tion. And to beleieve the same God
who is purely supernaturall, to be
also corporeall; Immortall, mor-
tall:

all into the hands of the Bride
groom, nor follow his Lure, nor
nakedly uncloath himselfe: which
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to see and fully receive him into
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tained.

It behoves therefore to stand free
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All may draw, suck up, and ana-
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Uncloathednesse; In this Body,
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simple sight (not severed as in the
Vulgar way) gives himselte to bee
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our Reason, as also his Incarna-
tion. And to beleewe the same God
who is purely supernaturall, to be
also corporeall; Immortall, mor-
tall:

tall : And that the one may be duly practised, the other must be duly pierced, and that the one may be thoroughly pierced, the other must be duly practised.

I except also those Images which are lively Mirrours, wherein we behold his Passion. As, our own Sufferings, Sorrowes, or Mortifications, which are to be brought into Union with his Passion, communicating with sweete Jesus, and that with ardent devotion, never forsaking the same.

Hither therefore is to be hastned Mortification of all other Images, as well hidden as visible, that the soule naked, may behold her Bridegroom also naked; the which is only compassed by meane of this Annihilation and Death. For, if Man be somewhat, he hath also some Image : Also he that lives, acts ; but no action is without an Image

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And this Annihilation wee cannot doe but onely suffer ; for if a Man would worke therein, or do something, he should finde himselfe the further from God, the more hee scuffled therein. For, the more hee workes, the more hee is. And the more he is, and lives, the further is he from Death and Nothing. *Ergo*, here nothing is to be done ; but all we can doe is to doe nothing, to refraine our selves from action, and to let him that lives, make us dye in him, and he that is, let us see in him our owne Not-being.

A fourth Imperfection is to desire a sensible Union, wherein many be faulty, and that unwittingly, because they discern it not : For, though they seeke it not openly, yet secretly they doe : which they shall know by this signe : They can never rest till they have got some feeling of the Union.

Whence

Whence it is, that they live in
 wayes in languishment of spirit
 nor can possibly reach to pure
 supernaturall contemplation, but
 as it were hide-bound within the
 straits of Nature, and imprisoned
 within the walls of feeling, they
 cannot goe out of themselves to
 supernaturals; nor see how God
 is absolutely Spirit and Life. And
 though the Minde now and then
 attempt some generous egress, yet
 Sense resists, not able to endure
 be-pulled from the pap of Sensible
 Comfort. But, as a Beast always
 bellows to the Pasture, and neighs
 after the provant, never resting
 through Importunity it draws
 downe the Spirit soaring aloft.

The Remedy whereof is to
 change each sensibility with Love
 naked and sequestred from all
 acquaintance with Sense; the which
 Love is strong, durable, and ever

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the same : Assuredly knowing that God is not sensible, nor can be comprehended by the Senses, but purely Spirit. For, he that duely considers these things shal easily see how far he is from sound judgment that would joyne himselfe by sense (which wee have common with brutes) to him whose Nature is Infinitely purer then the purest Angels. Which found to be true, he shal willingly and freely suffer this Spirit and Life to kill and annihilate our Feeling and Death.

Another Imperfection, is to seek for any assurance and experimental knowledg of this Union. And this differs not much from the former, yet somewhat more secret. For here some Man perswades himself, and so protests that hee seekes not, nor wilheth for sensible Comfort, but only a spirituall Union with God, although indeed he seeks the other

other also: And that shall he find by this signe: that he cannot be contented, but even doubts himself to be separated from God, until he have attain'd some particular Illumination, or experimentall Knowledge of his Union with God. Wherein hee failes many ways. For, first, he rests not upon God with strong enough Faith, but rather doubts of him. 2. Hee loves him with a Sensitive, and not with a naked Love. Thirdly, he buildeth upon the sand, and trusts to his owne feeling, staying himself thereon, as on his strong prop. Lastly, this causes that a Man can never depart out of his owne Land and out of himselfe, nor lay down himselfe all into the hands of God.

To prevent this Imperfection. Here is not any experimentall assurance to be sought for. *i.* No Light which may be perceived by our feel-

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ling, but onely to rest united to God by lively Faith and naked Love; The which shall most infallibly be accomplisht when we suffer this Infinite Being to reduce us to Nothing. For, then shal we be no more our selves, and consequently shall have no confidence in our selves, but seeing God to be all and every where, we shall be most intimately united to him.

A sixth Imperfection in this Life Supereminent is, to lift up the Minde, desiring to finde God in another place, and in a higher manner then in our selves. For, 'tis a blindness in the soule not to know that she is already there where shee desires to be, even in God, and God in her : Whereas the soule cleared of this obscurity, sees her selfe to be, and live in God more then in her selfe, and that shee is more his then her owne. *Ergo*, such

an act of lifting up the Minde the Soule is to cease from, and resting in her own Nothing, and constant in this All, continually to behold and embrace the same as with a Desire already obtained.

Here is also a secret deceite to be avoyded, arising from a most abstract Image, appearing when the Soule having lost all Images of all things seene, heard, and knowne, assaies to behold God as huge, and of a vast circumference as that of the skye, &c. opening and extending the Minde to such a bignesse yea rejoyces when shee attaines to behold him: Without which manner of seeing him, shee thinks her eye-sight of no worth, and strives in that manner to behold his Infinity, forgetting that object to be a forme and Image rather carved out by the soule her selfe, then so being of it selfe, which is not the absolute

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lute Truth, nor God: And though in the Interiour Will, this Image was good, and not to be despised; yet here, God is to be seen more essentially, and that by himselfe, and the finall Annihilation of our selves. Let not therefore the devout reader forget in these Imperfections as well past as following, of what thing and manner of Life we speak, i. of Contemplation in the Life Supereminent.

An eighth Adversary to the perfection of this Life is, to seeke God otherwise then by simple Remembrance. For, such a seeking presupposes absence; since none seekes what hee knowes hee has already. And this Contemplation presupposes the presence of God Yet this Imperfection arises from want of Faith: whilst we beleeve not that we have not what wee seek. Nor doth this Imperfection onely proceede

some darknes; but it also produceth others, causing that not to be found which is sought. All things have their time (saith the Wise man :) A time to seeke, a time to finde, a time to sow, a time to reape. And, as he that alway sowes and plowes can never reape; so he that should alway seeke God by practick Life, shall never enjoy him by fruite. For, if the Causes be ill directed, they not only take not their effects, but doe also produce the Contrary. As, alway to sow, not only stayes Corne from comming up, but also begets barrennesse. The same befalls in this seeking of God.

To remedy this Imperfection; God is here to be found and enjoyed by losse and Annihilation of our selves in simple Remembrance of him.

And the ninth Imperfection is, here to long for God as one absent, and

and that for reasons not unlike the former. For, what is in prayer and desire, is not also in possession. But, here God gives himselfe to be possessed, and is not therefore to be desired as absent, but enjoyed as present. This Desire also hath Act, hindering compleat Annihilation.

A tenth Imperfection is, to be carryed to God with an Imaginary Thinking : both, because that should not be, and also because it cannot be. It should not be ; for such an Act withstands Annihilation. It cannot be, because God is wholly Supernaturall, &c. but our thinking is Naturall. God is greater and above us : Our Thinking lesse, and below us. God therefore is to bee beheld, but not to be thought on Imaginarily.

There is also an Imperfection in casting a Looke as it were upon God, somewhat more then a sim-

ple Remembrance of him, as if hee were in some other place, and not in the Soule, and the Soule in him, as a fish in the Sea, or a bird in the Fire. And therefore the souls Look ought to be as suffering, she ever remaining in her Nothing, *i. e.* It should be extracted by this Divine Glory, not from her selfe. For, as the Sunne darts his rayes into any transparent Body, as water, glasse, or crystal, from thence provoking towards himselfe a certaine reflex Light. So, God who descends his Beames and light into the soule, doth also rebound from her a mutual aspect towards himselfe. But as that reflected Light is not the waters, but the Suns which piercing and inlustring the same, is flashed towards the Sun himselfe; So, the Light of this Eye-sight is not the soules but Gods: And being Spirit, Life and Light, it through-
breakes

breakes the soule, sublines her, and so is reflected on God, fixing the soul therewith, which is thus made one with God, as himselte saith. *The Word which goeth out of my mouth shall not return empty to me, but whatsoever I will, it shall accomplish and prosper in them to whom I send it.* For, as in a Bodily sight an object sends forth the forme or species to the eye, which being instantly reflected upon the eye-sight or seeing-power so toucht, closes therewith, and knitting it selfe thereto, flies with it to the object it selfe, from which the forme was sent forth, and so the sight of the same object is drawn out; So is it in spirituall sight, wherein God shoots out his God-like Light and his Will into the soule, which re-shining to God, the soule which so tasted their divine touch, onced therewith, flies away with the same.

And lastly, none of the least Imperfections is a too busie observance of these & such other Imperfections, which now possesses the soul, and makes her Active, because they either are, or at least containe Some Action.

Wherefore in checking them, 'tis faulty to be too much intangled, but only to doe it quicke with a twinkle of the eye, swift as Lightning.

All these Imperfections therefore contend against Annihilation. Not that so many points doe draw any Multiplicity upon this Exercise: For, how many soever the Imperfections be, yet are they all done away by one only point and perfection. For, as they all spring from one head [To be] so are they all vanisht by the contrary [Not to be] For, as all Imperfections assemble where Man is somewhat ; so doe all perfecti-

perfections flourish where hee ends to be: For, then God onely lives and reignes.

And if to any these seeme no Imperfections, 'tis because they lye too close. If any thinke them smal, 'tis because the great disadvantage they bring, is unknown. And lastly, if any take them for perfecti-
ons, 'tis even because they consider not what exercise wee have in hand, which is Contemplation in the Life Supereminent: where (saith *Bon.*) all intellectuall workings are esteemed blots and hinderances; For, as 'tis high, so it requires rules answerable to that height. Wherefore the Rules of the Active or Illuminate Life, or Meditations therein doe not suite therewith, for they be too low, as on the other side, the Rules of this, pertaine not to that, because they be too high.

CHAP. XI.

*Of a two-fold kinde of Annihilation
Their difference. And how they make
to a two-fold Love.*

BEcause this last Chapter shews
Annihilation only by ceasing
from all acts, vanishing of Images,
doing nothing, and rest from all
Motion in God: And forasmuch
as nathlesse 'tis required that some
times such Acts and workings must
be used, such Images admitted, and
that we must have such Motions in
renewing of workings, in Medita-
tion, in studies, preaching, practise
of the passion, &c. it therefore
stands us upon, to point out a way
to annihilate such acts, as also to
shew the practise thereof. For,
though we have shewed, that those
Acts as well as all other things,
are nothing, and though a Man
have

have the knowledge of this nothing & of their Annihilation, yet may he want the practise. Wherefore both these points are equally necessary in this matter, (as wee said before) that God alone may be seen alwayes, who is the end of this Annihilation.

But now to practise this thing duely: First, I admonish the Reader to pluck up his spirits here, that they may worke more supernaturally, and (I say not, further from sense then before, but) flat contrary thereto. For, where before he annihilated them when they were absent, here he must also annihilate them present.

Which to doe, and that this Annihilation may bee cleare and apparent, we will here distinguish it into Active and Passive. Passive is, when the man himselfe, and all other things are cast asleep, vainly, and

and be made nothing. I call it passive, because 'tis onely suffered: The Imperfections whereof wee have blowne away in the former Chapter.

The Active Annihilation is when the Man himselfe, and all other things are annihilated not onely sufferingly, as in the Passive, but doingly, I meane by Light in the Understanding, as well naturall, as supernaturall: wherein he sees and most infallibly knows that all those things are nothing, and rests upon this knowledge in despite of feeling. The one of these Annihilations lives when all Image and feeling of the Creatures is gone. The other continues also firme and sure, even whilst they remaine, after sense, and yet by means of this light are seene to bee nothing. The one consists in Knowledge, drawne from Experience,

when

when a man sees himselfe brought to nothing, as 'tis said, *I am brought to nothing*. The other consists in Knowledge true indeed, yet not seeming so after sense, but after understanding. Of these two the Active is more perfect for two reasons; Strength and Duration. For strength, because together with it selfe, it nothings all other things: Not onely when it sailes with the actuall blast and breath of this Will or Divine Being; but even then also when the soule feels drought and barrenesse; annihilating all things felt, as well as those which be gone and vanisht. The which point requires carefull Attention. For, thus it annihilates as well all things that remain after feeling, as also that same which annihilates them, *i. the owne Understanding and Knowledge, with all manner of working thereof.*
Not

Not enduring that any thing whatsoever, Image nor feeling remaine, but only God. For strength also, because neither a multitude of outward affaires, nor abundance of inward or intellectuall workings can hinder this Annihilation, or distract the man himself. For strength againe; Because 'tis not onely farre distant from sense, but flat contrary thereto: So that it annihilates things not onely when the minde in abstractions rides above them; but even then when 'tis conversant among them, looking on them as if it looked not: whence necessarily arises Duration, which is the second perfection of Active Annihilation. And both these perfections are not so perfectly found in the Passive Annihilation, which stayes alwayes the Actuall Lure of God. There be many that both know and pra-

ctise

stife the Passive, but few the Active. And so, they no sooner fasten on any worke bodily or spirituall, but they easily linke, fall downe, and become divided, and so live alwayes in languishing and unsatisfi- ednesse of spirit.

These two Annihilations make to a two-fold Love, fruitive, and practick, whereon stands the whole spirituall Life. The Passive tends to the Fruitive Love, the Active to the Practick. For in as much as these two Loves are never perfect, till in the Practick love wee can enjoy God even as in the Fruitive; 'Tis therefore expedient that this Active Annihilation mediate to annihilate the Acts of this Practick Love, which otherwise might hinder that enjoying, and raise so many middle walls between God and the soule. As therefore the Passive Annihilation nothings all things by

by deadning all our feeling of them, and transchanging them into enjoying Love: So, the Active annihilates them also still remaining, (though in sense wee feelee them) transforming them into fruitive Love: So that the Love, which without this Active Annihilation were meerly Practick, may thus become fruitive. And so by this Active Annihilation we shall continually enjoy God, whether we worke and produce Acts or no. But, as the same falls not under sense, but is onely spirituall and supernaturall: So the enjoyment to which it leads us is not perceived in our feeling, but in spirit, and transcends nature.

CHAP. XII.

That this Active Annihilation consists in equalling the Passive. The practise of it in Light and Remembrance.

THE Perfection of this Active Annihilation consists in equalling the Passive, in a Death of all things, and in a Passive Annihilation, after the spirit, though not after feeling. And the signe shewing it to be absolutely perfect, is when it annihilates the things which we perceive by sense as verily as if wee perceiv'd them not: And even in the face of all these sensibles brings as Invincible faith, peace, and union with God, as among those things which are already lost and nothing. For, thus a man seeing, sees not, when he holds not the same Formes in Meditation

dition and Debatement. And so he lives in a perpetuall Death, and dyes in an eternall Life, buried in Triumph of Conquest, like that valiant Champion *Eleazar*, intomb'd in the glory of his victory, when crusht with the fall of the Beast he ended his dayes. For, this Beast which hee slew is the whole finisble world, which when wee kill and bring to nothing, we also slay and annihilate our selves; and so are buried (as it were thereunder) and our Life is hid with Christ in God.

The summe of the practise of this Annihilation consists in two things, Light and Remembrance. The use of the Light is generall: The use of Remembrance is to raise us again, when we forget and grow distracted.

For the first: This Light is no other but a pure, simple, naked,

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And so and habituall Faith, which Reason helps, Experience ratifies and confirms. Nor falls it under sense, nor hath any acquaintance therewith; yea it resists the same: But it resides in the Crowne of the soule, and beholds God without any Meane. I say, 'tis pure; excluding all help of the senses, so as all in vaine should any prop or assurance be groped for from them which are utterly to bee renounc'd. First, because the helpe of that Devotion, which is had from the senses, endures not: but this Faith is lasting. Secondly, because when sensible Devotion is had, 'tis not certaine, but variable. But this Faith is constant. Nor is it sufficient to renounce the senses, unlesse we also annihilate them, because they be erroneous and lying, perswading us to believe that things are: Contrariwise, this faith is lightesome, and

and points us to walk in the spirit.

Secondly, I call it simple, to cut of all multiplicity of Reasoning, as a thing repugnant to the purity of this Faith. First, because it makes it humane, where it should be Divine. Secondly, because it moves us to produce Acts, and consequently to be but causes, not Annihilations. Thirdly, because it Clouds, and fumes up Exhalations betweene GOD and the soule.

Thirdly, I call it habituall: under which word is much comprized, and very remarkable; which is, that it ought to bee continuall without ceasing or interruption, that so wee may ever behold this Infinite of Nothing and All: which though it seem hard to doe, yet that it may be done, two Reasons shall confirme. One is, that as an Angel, though hee be upon earth,

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yet for the homeliness he hath to his place is said to bee in heaven : So this Light and Faith, though sometimes they doe not actually see this Nothing, and this All, yet through the disposednesse wherein they accustome to behold them, they alwayes persevere in the sight of them. And as an Angel in the twinkle of an eye, mounts from earth to heaven : So, this Light and Faith in an Atom's time, reach the actuall contemplation of God, and this nothing. And as an Angel so return'd is counted to have been in heaven, as it were from the beginning ; and so is verified that Say of our Saviour, *Their Angels doe alway behold the face of my heavenly Father.* So also this Light, when it actually sees that Mystery, even when they forget and seem to be distracted.

Fourth-

Fourthly, I add [which Reason helps.] i. the first point before mentioned, which is Knowledge grounded on Reason, Philosophy, the Fathers, and holy Scriptures & Examples. All which arguments are drawne to this word Reason, whereby this Faith is assisted. And this contradicts not what wee said before, that this Faith excludes all Reasoning: for I spake this concerning the second point touching the practise of Annihilation, the which must be free from all multiplicity of Discourses. But, here I speake of the first point Knowledge, which is strengthened by reason and discourse.

I add, which [experience ratifies and confirms] i. when the soule div'd and drown'd in this Infinite, sees her selfe brought to nothing. For, thus her Light and Faith are much encreased; so that it shall af-
terwards

terwards bee very easie for her to believe this Annihilation, and by this light to dive her selfe deeper and deeper therein.

Sixtly, I say, it comes not under sense: The reason is; because as the understanding is not subjacent nor tyed to any Organ, so neither is this Light, which pertaines to the understanding: whence it followes that it falls not under sense, because no Might of the soule can feele without its owne Organ.

Seventhly, I affirme, that this Faith and Light resist sense; For, they directly fight against it. What Sense affirms, they deny: Sense saith such or such a thing is; which Faith and Light (in respect of Gods presence) say, is not.

Eighthly, I place this Faith in the Crowne of the Soule, because that place is furthest from the Senses,

ses, and nearest to God : and it is the very top of the Soule.

Ninthly, I say : It beholds God without Meane : because 'tis not hindered by sense or Sensible things, but stands free and cleere from them all.

Touching the second point : this Remembrance is a certaine Inspiration, Illumination, Touching, or Out-breake of Divine Light, which strikes the Soule, and quicker then Lightning smites, rowses, & shews her where shee is, even lost in this All, and in the Armes of her Dear. And thus by the furtherance of this Remembrance the soule mounts her selfe when she seemes distracted from the Actual sight and Remembrance of God.

But note well that I call it a Remembrance, and not Inturning for two Reasons.

First, because turning in, stirres Action,

Action, such as this Remembrance hath scarce any, by reason of the exceeding purity, nakednes, and simplicity.

Secondly, because such In-turning presupposes Out-turning and Distraction, which befalls not in this Remembrance, because it nothings all Distraction whatsoever.

Againe, I call it Remembrance, because it consists not in an act of the soule so much as in the divine working upon her, not proceeding from her, but from God.

Thirdly, because it changes not the state of the soule, making her nearer to the Divine Being, nor the Divine Being nearer to her; but onely lets her see where, in what degree, and state she is, even in this All : Alway presupposed that shee neglect not her duty in this practice.

Fourthly, because 'tis swift,
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and passes quicker then Act.

Fiftly, because the soule hath it before she can think : Nor can she looke so suddenly as she hath it againe; And that because of the habit of Light, and Faith where with she is endowed.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Imperfections or Impediments of Active Annihilation.

THE practise of this Annihilation will appeare more clearly by opposing thereto the failings and impediments thereof. And therefore we will here discusse the same.

And first, 'tis an imperfection to doubt of the Reall presence of God, or to believe the same doubtingly, or with a languishing and sleepy faith.

Secondly, not to live by this faith,

i. to sicke at things as if they were something, not waking to behold this lustre and glory of the Bridegroom, and everlastingly to embrace him, who is not onely knowne to be present, but of all things only present; before whom they all vanish and cease to be esteemed for any thing.

Thirdly, to believe the Senses, and let them rule over the Light, Reason and Faith. To listen to them, since they be lying, and bring in death, whose windowes they be. Nor, by them can there be any way to Life, inasmuch as this Life far transcends them. Lastly, since 'tis they wee here fight with to bring them to nothing, therefore in their owne cause they can be no Judges, but must dye and be nothing'd.

Fourthly, to shun any necessary Worke, outward or inward, for

feare of Distraction. For therein
appeares the error, Darknesse and
failing of such Annihilation in
accounting that worke to be some-
what, where indeed 'tis nothing.
And surely to him that takes it for
somewhat, 'tis somewhat indeed,
and therefore not a little to be fea-
red. But, if his Anihilation were
perfect, the worke were nothing,
nor worth his feare. Yea, he that
so abandons a necessary worke, su-
staines double disadvantage, and
incurreth a double blindnesse. First,
on the things, which to him is tur-
ned into Darknesse: And second-
ly, on the Feares part, which with
the stroke raises obscurity. Where-
in they faile exceedingly, who de-
sire to doe any thing, repine and
excuse themselves, deluded under a
painted cloak of giving themselves
to the Spirit. And so they run a
way from that which they feare
they

they seeke, i. from God, who is in that worke, and draw on themselves a triple darknesse and stumbling block. 1. Worke. 2. Act. 3. Their owne will and Disobedience.

Fifthly, to adjourne a simple Conversion to God; which often befalls those who having any outward worke, or any Meditation in hand, thinke they cannot come to God till the worke be done, which manner of doing contains two failings: One, that in this work they were not first united and annihilated: the other, that they thought it impossible while the work lasted. In both they faile, and flye backe from this Annihilation, wherein if they persisted constantly, it would dissolve al things alike, and eternally hold a most happy union.

Herein also appeares Sensuality, closely hunting for comfort by a

sensible Union, which it seemes it cannot reach till the worke be done.

A 6th. Imperfect. and that a close one, is to turn our selves in, as it were, from a place without to a place within; as if God were present or more in one place then in another; which directly opposes this Annihilation. For, Annihilation holds us within by the presentnes of God in al steads, and by an abolishment of all those things which might never so little turne out or distract us. Also this turning in, workes against kindly Course, flying from those things which should fly from us and vanish, even All things. For, whilst the soule turnes her selfe in, shee flyes from things without growing somewhat afraid of them: And the more shee feares, the thicker they runne in her mind; Besides, she entertaines them

them into Gods place, whose prerogative reaching to be everywher, so that at his presence all things should melt, the contrariwise allows them so much place, that they rather exclude God. Besides, this Turning in is not free from sense; Nor can it rest or beleve it selfe enough turn'd in, till first it taste some certainty thereof.

Lastly, this Inturning is such an Imperfection, that he that useth it is ever anew to begin. For, he that withdraws himselfe from things as oft as any work is to be done, he sinks again into them; then grows distracted, and so is to beginne again.

Inturning therefore I say is to be rejected, because Out-turning is never to be admitted, but to live constantly in the Infinite of this Divine Being, & the Nothingnesse of all things. And if a man finde

himselfe fallen without, let him recover himselfe by Annihilation, not by Inturning.

A seventh Imperfection is to put a Difference betweene perceiving & not perceiving, *i.* when by the benefit of some particular Light, one proves this All and this Nothing: Yet, being thus enlightned, he is not to assent more or lesse to this Truth, then when hee seemes depriv'd of the same Light. Where it happs that divers Men led by some especiall pull profoundly into God, doe beleeve with a strong Faith that God is All, and the Creature Nothing: because they see it so: But, being a little forsaken, and left without taste, they glide away into another Conceite, and at length to grosse error, in making God sometimes greater, sometimes more present then at other times. Yea, they value the
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Creature sometimes more, sometimes lesse; only because they judg not by light of Faith, but by opinion of their senses.

An 8th. Imperfection is, to take this Remembrance only as our own Act or proper Motion. For thus in some measure it should be a Let to true Contemplation. But it is even to be entred primely as the worke and Motion of God, that though some little thereof seem to be on our part, yet that little may be nothing'd by Active Annihilation, that nothing may rise betwixt God and the soule at all.

A ninth Imperfection is, not to be contented with this Simple Remembrance. The reason is, because whatsoever is done either by searching, desiring, or self-turning inwards, doth all tend to Being and Multiplication, not to not being and simplification. Where many
G 5 faile,

faile, alwaies almost pursuing further, whilst they labour to repell those things which before they should have knowne to be nothing. Sometimes also in seeking God, whom also wee should beleeve to be neerer us, and more we then our selves. And the more they work & search thus, the lesse they finde because of the great Multiplicity and commotion of the Soule. And contrariwise the lesse they worke and search in this manner, biding content with this simple and naked Remembrance, the more they shall see God, because of the great simplicity and calmnesse of the Soule.

To conclude: The last Imperfection is, not to persevere everlastingly and without stop in the practise of this Exercise of All and Nothing. Yet this failing is ordinary with many, who at every

every encountring Act, work, and motion doe cut and knap off the threed of this habituall Annihilation. And so following sense, and not naked Faith, they cannot see this All in the Creator, and Nothing in the Creatures. The cure of all these Imperfections is plain: which is to walke perpetually in this Annihilation, Light, and Remembrance: as we shewed before.

Now, the cloze and conclusion of these 2 Annihilations is, that by the passive, the soule mounted and taken up to God with all her Might, abides in high abstraction uncloathed of all Images, in rest of spirit, and ceasing from acts: In the Active she stands also fixt, (though not after Sense) in the very face of all those Acts and Images remayning. Both these Annihilations are to bee practised by simple Remembrance.

And

And that soule which duly fans away all these imperfections, opposing the two Annihilations, shall never be denyed a blessed arrival in God (presupposing the Common goodnesse ever at hand.) As on the other side, with these Imperfections she can never come there.

Doubtlesse there be many, who for want of discovering and correcting them, sticke many yeares at the threshold without entrance. Therefore let not him that desires the true way to Contemplation, grow light-minded, or count them for small matters; for they cannot be small, that hinder so great a good.

'Tis true I confesse, that sometimes the pull of the holy Ghost may be so ravishing, that it may mount the soule to God, without punctuall avoydance of all these Imperfections. But that grace is extraordinary

traordinary, and not to be lingred upon, that wee should neglect to gird up our selves with all our mights thereto.

Here note also, that as in the Interior Will we are not to flye back to the Exterior, but to accomplish all our workes according to the Nature of the Interior Will: So, neither should hee that hath wonne the Tower of this Supereminent Will, goe forth any more to either of the other, but dwell here for ever, by drawing, doing them here, spiritualizing, and even spending them to nothing through this Annihilation, as wee have shewed in this part. But in saying that hee should not returne to the exterior Will, I give no counsell to despise outward works: for of this error have I warned the Reader else-where. But I will that in doing them, they be spiritualiz'd and annihilated.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

That the practise of these two Annihilations is not to be disorderly confounded as touching Time & Place: but each to be assign'd his own Time and Place. What time & Place suits the one, and what the other. Of 3 kinds of working. Of the true & false rest, with the differences & signs whereby to know them.

THese two Annihilations have each of them his proper Time and Place, which are not to be confounded together. Now that wee may see what place is meete for the one, and what for the other ; these 2 Annihilations make to a two-fold Love. The Passive to an enjoying Love, *i.* to a naked beholding Union and enjoyment of God. The Active to a practicke Love, *i.* to our Outgoing, Lively and faithful working, whether bodily or spirituall.

So,

So, then the proper place of the Passive Annihilation is when wee lye prostrate to the Fruitive Love. Because the Passive reduces all Motions and workings to nothing, avants all forms and Images, and so leads us to the fruition of God.

The Place for the active Annihil. is when we are to follow the Practick Love: For, by this Annihil. as by a certain transcendence of the Mind, all our works, acts, & operations as wel of the body as soul, are nothing'd: so going out without going out, working without working, Being without Being, living and yet dead, we transforme the practick Love into the fruitive, & change the Active Life into the Contemplative; Enjoy God by Faith in working and Action, as fully as in rest and ease; which is the Top and spire of Perfection.

And

So,

And these are the proper places of the two Annihilations. They erre therefore that disorder them, and alter their right courses; using indeed a Passive Annihilatiō & favoring Acts and Operations, (as some doe) when they should faithfully worke in the Practicke Love. And practising the Passive Annihilation, producing Acts (as many do) when they should suppress them, and enjoy God by Fruitive Love. The first run upon a false rest: the other, a hurtfull Activenesse. Some throw a too much Retirednesse hide their Talent: Others through superfluousnesse of working fall short of God. But, that these two extreames may be combin'd, and both the Mistakes amended, it remains that we now shew the times agreeing to these two Annihilations, the not knowing whereof, brings the two foresaid Errours.

There

Bodily labors good in their place. 137

There be three sorts of Active Love, or working : Exterious, Interior, and Intimate ; Exterious, employed in bodily labours ; Interior in discourses and studies ; Intimate, in renewing of workings and prayer.

For the first. Though bodily works they be only, yet are they not to be neglected, when obedience, engagement, love, or discretion calls and requires them. In which thing, we are to sticke close to the rule of the exterior Wil. And if that Rule require them not, it shall be no wisdom to forsake the Fruitive Love to goe to doe them. For, though the Active Annihilation reduces all to Nothing : yet, such a Liberty is not expedient, as runs unwittingly upon Impertinencies. *He that loves danger shall perish therefore ; And hee that linkes hard tyes not strong : Yea, he that willingly sets himselfe*

himselfe aworke about needlesse things, cannot duely practise this Annihilation. But if on the other side hee refuse to doe such worke after the same Rule, he incurreth a dull rest, the more to be feared because veiled with a false vizard of Contemplation concerning the Interiour working, as Studies, discourse, or giving ones selfe to the Spirit. The limits of necessity are not to be transgressed, & superfluities warily to be avoyded; the which are never free from Passions, Affections and Negligence, wherein if we be not watchful, no small Immortification & vexation arises in the soule, which encrease & swell there the more, the lesse we account them such; being dawb'd over with a vain Tincture of perfection: Whereout of necessity arises an inordinate & dangerous liberty of Mind, pouring it self forth into

all kind of phantasticke thoughts,
and losing the bridle to fleshly Ima-
ginations and ridiculous discour-
ses, whereout of necessity arises an
inordinate and dangerous liberty
of Mind pouring it selfe forth into
all kind of phantasticke thoughts,
whereby all Passions have their free
entry. Pride, Selfe-conceit, Am-
bition, Suspicion, Rash Judgment,
Contempt of our Neighbours, the
false Joy, Sadnesse, Feare, Anger,
Envy, and of Miseries what not ?
which nathelesse a Dulnesse & un-
sensiblenesse of the evill makes to
be little troubled at ; all prick of
Conscience being blunted; wher-
to great heede is to bee taken.
But if it appeare by this Rule that
the Wil of God requires his Indu-
stry in Studies, Discourse, &c. and
yet hee hangs backe therefrom;
this is a sluggish faint-heartednesse,
though vail'd under pretext of
piety,

of piety, or addicting himselfe to the Spirit.

Touching the Intimate working as renewing of our practise in contemplation, &c. 'Tis only then to bee produc't when by reason of Gods working withdrawn, and our owne waxing faint, or because of feeble and sluggish Nature the Minde is sunke as it were yawning, and grows heavy, and lets fall from her memory this Blessed-making object. Yet, so long as by the Pull and Inworking of the Bridegroom, or by strength or rowling of the Minde, or even by patient cleaving to God, or by simple Remembrance, she can persevere in Union with God in the Fruitive Love; 'Tis not best to forsake the Passive Annihilation, and the Fruitive Love that depends thereon, to take in hand by acts to practise the Active Annihilation: provided that

by

by simple Remembrance she stand
to her part. For there it is that the
soule is so transported, inlarg'd,
inlightned, and united to God:
there she tastis the chaste embraces,
sweet entercourses, and divine kis-
ses: there she sees her selfe sublim'd,
ennobled, and glorified with An-
gels at the cœlestiall Table. There
she relishes the fruits of her Morti-
fication, the treasures of her Re-
pentance, and the Comforts of all
her Selfe-denyalls, and of those
weapons shee found out to make
war upon her selfe, for attaining
the Kingdome of Heaven, which is
to be got by violence. Let her not
therefore (I say) forsake this Pas-
sive Annihilatlon, and the Fruitive
Love descending therefrom; No,
though she feel not those comforts
but find this Fruitive Love so bare
to her feeling, that shee lose all her
owne feeling and assurance of com-
fort

fort, which is the satisfaction of Nature. And this is the true Rest, wherein both her faithfulness is tryed, and the soule is seated in a true poverty of Spirit, patience, and essentiall Resignation of her selfe. There whatsoever of Man remaines in the soule is done away. There the Death ended, and the conquest atchieved. There is the gholt given up betweene the hands of God, and lastly there is the Man transformed whole into God: For, by this constancy and Death, God lives and reignes in him, and in him accomplishes all his workes. By this Rest and ceasing from Acts, is pure abstraction and Uncloathing of Spirit attained too, wherein the Soule is spung'd of all errors and impurities, and practises all vertues and perfections, (though essentially and without multipli-

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multiplicity.) For, here is used a
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of heart, which not only can en-
dure no consent or delight, but e-
ven not the least feeling or thought
of Sinne, they being open ene-
mies to this Rest and Annihilati-
on: so that here all Passions
are appeased, Affections mortifi-
ed, and Motions restrained. Here
Love is ordered, Desire bridled,
Joy tempered, Hate killed, Sadnes
mitigated, Vain hope extinct, De-
spair rejected, Fear put to flight,
Presumption abased, Wrath pa-
cified; and shortly to stay, here,
all Inordinatenesse of the Soule is
rectified and reformed. But if e-
ven the least passion, affection, or
Inordinatenesse get head, there is
then no perfect rest, no Passive An-
nihilation till they be conquered.
If we seek Vertues: How profound
humility is it thus to nothing
our-

our selves? How invincible Patience thus to waite? How strong constancy thus to persevere? How lovely Long-suffering to attend God so long with so fixt and faithfull an eye? How chaste Virginity to present our selves thus simple? Lastly, what Faith livelier, what hope surer, what Love more ardent then is found in this Annihilation and Rest? Though indeed all these Vertues suckt up as it were in the Infinite of Divinity; are there practised more essentially as in their Fount and wel-spring then actually. They erre therefore, who being forsaken of a perceivable or experimentall Union, turne their backs straightway upon this Annihilation, Death, and expyration, leaping backe to themselves, and retaking them to their own acts, refuse to endure this Rest, Emptinesse and poverty of Spirit, this

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tercourse, Supercelestiall or Essen-
tiall Illumination, though indeed
the true and Divine Wisedome
and naked seeing of God, is only
attained in this Annihilation, Rest,
Expiration and Death: So that in
this their flying backe & returning
to themselves they doe no other
but far estrange themselves from
all pure and empyreall knowledg,
and from al union and transforma-
tion into God, and so bide alwaies
straitned within themselves and
their owne bowels, and in the fet-
ters of the old Man, as wee have
clearly shewed: But they that be
otherwise minded, that they may
the better pamper nature and their
owne feeling, are pleased to let
themselves be deluded under a false
shew of vertue, saying that in this
Annihilation they ought to co-
operate with God and not to rest,
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when indeede the more they rest
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unexperienc't ones can hardly be-
leeve it. For, this way of working
is spirituall and Godlike, and far
from feeling and common work-
ing of Man, which can never unite
the soule to God immediately. But,
let them say what they please; If
they would thoroughly search
the depth of their minde, they
should finde that no other thing
But selfe-love, unfaithfulnes, faint-
heartednesse, selfe-seeking and im-
patience of spirit, calls them backe
from this Annihilation, how much
soever nature bulwarkes her selfe
under a faire pretence of Vertue.
Some there be, who in this Anni-
hilation have many yeares hung at
the doore of persecution without
assaying to enter: because when
by ceasing from their owne Actes
and

and by Annihilation of themselves they should have anchored in God, they returned back into their own Countrey by renewing their owne Acts and humane workings, who nevertheless being shewed their failing, have easily found passage through this gate. But though the greatelt part of Spiritualls incline to this extreame, yet it may bee, and some there are that lean the other way to a rest too much; taking streames for meanes, and the false rest for the true. We will therefore make each of the known fro other.

The false Rest, is Rest taken in Nature, not in God: wherein neither in Nature, nor yet in God any operation is exercised. And thus it may bee knowne from the true and good rest. The false is indeede a Rest, but not Annihilation, and it nourisheth in it selfe much selfe Love. The good Rest

is absolute Annihilation perfecting the whole man. The false is turn'd from God & reflected upon it selfe; The true is turned from it selfe, & reflected upon God. The false seeks consolatiō & solace; the true, content with God alone, lets goe all other things. The false is busied about an Imaginary death & Annihilation; the true about a Reall one. The false eanes more then too much upon the old Man and selfe-will: the true counts it selfe altogether vile. The false sets down it selfe as the end wherein to rest: the true is taken as a meane to come to God. The false makes the soule dull, darke and ignorant in vertues; the true enriches her with the contrary ornaments. The false-loosens and benummes the conscience, clumping & making it heedlesse of grosse imperfections: the true, sharpes it and makes it
Sensible

sensible of the least blemish. The false presents sadnesse and impatience when duties of obedience or love are to bee undergone : the true teaches Resignation and Joy. The false having little sound Mortification, takes paines more in hiding then in subduing imperfections (witness their life that follow it, sitting downe without the true Rest,) the true rejoyces in true Mortificatiō, heartily rooting out all imperfections. Lastly, the false puffes up with Ambition, and suggests a high conceit of it selfe; the true holds low with humility, bringing in Selfe-contempt. And to conclude, the one without any cleaving to or Remembrance of God makes the highest end the owne ease, never intending to produce any inward act, how much soever it sees it selfe sunke, false asleepe, and degenerate

rate into pure nature. The other is never without some cleaving to God and Remembrance of him, but is ever armed with some thought very spirituall, and alwaies disposed to reare it selfe againe, whensoever it feeles it selfe sliding or slipping into pure nature, through heaviness of the Might and drowlines of the faculties of the soule. And these bee the differences between these two Rests, and the signes whereby they may be knowne. And above the rest, the last is the chiefe, being a most remarkable difference and plaine, and sufficing by it selfe without more.

Neverthelesse, if here a little forgetfulness of God creepe on us through frailty; yet are wee not therefore to waver and cast all away as a false rest; but onely for so much, not for all. *i.* for that space of time wherein wee persevered

the other red forgetfull of God, but for no longer. And by diligent watch to him, but redeeme the time, and not by hea- though vie faint-heartednesse to give over s dispo all. No, nor can that bee the false vlenso- rest, if that heaviness proceed of or slip frailty and against the Will. For h heavi- the false rest is voluntary. lowlines

e. And Loe there! the three kindes of etweene working, Exterious, Interior, e signes and Intimate, the extreames ne. And and the meanes. The inordinate chiefe, working which is the false-liber ference ty; The Idle-ease which makes the ic selfe false rest: And that which comes in due time, wherein consists the holy Activeness according to the e for- course and exercise of the Active on us Annihilation as abovesaid. And ee not when the time requires not that all a- wee goe forth to such action and for so practise of Love, by the Active An- r that nihilation, then is it right that we rseve- bide rooted and grounded in Vni- red

on & enjoying love by the Passive Annihilation. And thus you see the proper times of these two Annihilations as before you saw the places.

CHAP. XV.

The manner of passing forwards in the three kinds of Working; Exterior, Interior, and Intimate: Where is shewed the drawing of the Active and Contemplative Life to the Supereminent. And the Practise of the two former Wills in the third.

HAVING now shewed the Time and Place of working; it remains that we declare the manner.

And first, for the Exterior and Interior working, whose Time & Place (though they be the same in this Essentiall as in the Exterior Will, after the Rule of things Commanded, Forbidden, and Indifferent; whether bodily or spiri-
tual

tuall; which Law is never to be abrogated under any cloake of Perfection whatsoever;) yet in the manner of working they differ as far as the Supereminent Life excels the Active: For he that is a Worker in this third, is also to accomplish the Duties of the first, and yet not to descend nor give backe thereto.

Wherefore in the practick Love and outward workings, as in bodily Workes, as also in the inward Love or Working, as to labour for vertues, to meditate, to repell vices and temptations, to quench passions and affections; none of these are to be done as in the Exterior Will, by setting before our selves this Essentiall Will and divine Being, or because God is, or that God may be. Assuredly knowing that thus a dwelling is prepared for God who will thus shine

in the soule : where contrariwise, by our Selfe-will and Darknesse we should neither enjoy God, nor behold this Being. So that when we doe any outward Good works either by embracing Vertue, or rejecting Sin and Passions ; we doe it not here by directing any Intention, but by knowing most surely, simply and plainly, that so God will be. Where, in working contrary, not God should be, but we our selves, so far forth as in us lay, nor for us : No, nor yet as touching God himselfe, so far forth as we could withstand it. And thus through our Sinne and Selfe-will, and by preventing God, we should set up our selves, and so advance our owne Sinne and Passion for a God and an Idol.

But, take heed that I say not, In doing these or these things, God will be there ; i. in those things,

or then and at such a time; but simply and indefinitely, *God will be.* For, the word Being or God abstracts from [here] and [now,] so that hee is not onely in such a Good worke, but every where, as that Soule most plainly proves, that sees her selfe by this Practise swing'd along in a strange Maze without herselfe in this Being, and capt therewith as in a Dissolution of all things thereinto. Nor knows she whether she touch the ground.

Neither say I: The Soul should then see God; but simply [see him] is not as beginning from thence forwards, but as being from the beginning, or rather without all beginning. For, in him she sees eternity without beginning and end. Besides since all Active Life as exercise of Vertues, and contention against Vices; as also the Contemplative Life, are drawn to this Essentiall

sentiaall: and since consequently the practise of them consists in these two points; wee are here no lesse to take heart never to slide away from this All and this Nothing, then wee were in the other two lives to persevere in the Divine Will and Selfe-denyall: Resting ever assured, that as oft as we lose the Divine Being, and finde our selves as some-what; so often we stray from the Divine Will & Perfection, and follow our owne will and evill. We should therefore alwayes hold fast this All and this Nothing, but chiefly when wee practise any thing which is of Vertue and perfection, or avoid any thing tending to errour and Imperfection.

Nor are our Affections and Passions to be pampered under cloake of Active Annihilation by conceiting a false hope of making them
to nothing

nothing thereby. For, that cannot be done, because the very Affection it selfe, the Passion, and false being is the absence of the true Being : So that *To be willingly imperfect*, and also to be annihilated, do no lesse contradict each other, then to be and not to be, both at once. For, to be subject to passions, is that being which diametrally thwartes Annihilation & Not-being. Such Annihilation therefore is counterfeite and good for Nothing, but to excuse excuses in sins. Yet this I mean only of those Passions and Temptations whereto free consent is given : For, otherwise those Passions and Temptations whereto our Reason renounces to give consent, (though wee feele them sticke never so strong in the Soule;) yet are they to be nothingd by mean of the Active Annihilation. And so we neede confesse

158 *Sins death is the life of Blisse.*

fesse nothing in them but this All, as in the first part wee acknowledged nothing but the will of God. Where note, that if a Man really and truly beare downe all passions and imperfections by his owne nothing and the Divine All; he shall at length returne victorious in a finall and triumphant Conquest of them all, and become so thoroughly stablisht, fortified and inthron'd in this practise that hee shall tast infinite more pleasure from this mortification of himselfe, then he ever before tasted in slavery to his own will and lust. For, to him that attaines hither, all the paine, contradiction and sorrow which hee suffered in fighting against his owne will and desire, is suddenly changed into Joy and Blisse, whilst instead of himselfe he enjoyes not any grace or vertue, but God himselfe, for whose alone sake he thus denyes

Blisse.

is All,
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denyes

Sins death is the life of blisse. 159

denyes himselfe. And thus it is cleere what manner of working is to bee observed in the Outer and Inner Operation. *i.* That they are not to be produc't in the Exterior Will, or according thereunto; but through and in the Essentiall Will which is God himselfe. Not, that Outward works are to be despis'd or neglected, but done after a perfect manner, bodily turned into spirituall, and the Active Life drawn up to the Contemplative, and the Exterieur and Interiour Wills to the Essentiall. And this shall suffice for the place, time, and manner of working.

For the second Interiour Will and working therein, I know no need here to speake thereof, both because 'tis but as an effect of the first, and also because 'tis contained as perfectly in these two, as a beane within two extreame.

Now

Now, having seen the way of practick Love, or working outward and inward; we come to the Intimate working, the use whereof useth to befall in Prayer, when the Soule as we have said finds her self foyld and forgetfull of God. But now how pure, how simple and spritely this working ought to be, & how little acquaintance it should have with our Senses, is manifest from the very name and epithite of Intimate. For, since here Intimatenesse, Purity, and Spirituality are but one and the same thing, it follows that inasmuch as nothing is more inward then that which is intimate, that nothing is more pure or spirituall. And therefore there is such exceeding purity and spritelinesse required in this working, lest it should disturb the soul from the Union and Fruitive Love sinke her too neer to Nature, and
wrii

writhe her too much into her self,
but contrariwise, rather immedi-
ately fix her in Union, and seat her
in the Divine Being far distanc'd
from her selfe, and transcending
Nature: Many faile in this Rule
of Intimate Acts; some more, some
lesse.

For, some there be that make no
end of producing fervent acts and
naturall workings, running there-
by so much further from the true
union and essentiall Contemplati-
on, as they thinke by doing to
come neerer: And so much the
more sticking in themselves and
their owne Nature, as they thinke
they live in God and his Being.
For, such workings are neither
intimate nor pure, but exterior
and uncleane.

And these faile not onely in the
purity and profoundnesse of wor-
king, but also in the Time. For,
they

they alwayes act, leaving no room for Fruitive Love.

Others worke with no lesse violence and tempest of Natural Motions then these doe; but not so oft: but only when they feele the heavinessse and drowinessse of Nature: and these erre in the Intimate working of this Life, though they hold the due time.

Lastly, some there are that produce Acts so halfe sleeping, (indeed much finer Acts then those others) yet not pure enough for that Intimate purity here required: But still they breath their own Motions by Naturall strength and Langour to satisfie Nature.

But, in this place I take them to be pure intimate and perfect working to bee that which stands in a sole simple, and pure Remembrance of God, and is produc't by pure and naked faith, whereof *Chap. 12.*

cause that alone is the true Meane
twixt the said Extreames of false
Rest and hurtfull Activity, and is
the sole Intimate working which
immediately sets the soule in Uni-
on and enjoying Love, and waits
her into the Divine Being. For,
this Remembrance opposes it selfe
against that false Rest, Drowsinesse
and Heavinesse of Nature, ever
rowling the Soule, and making her
attentive to her All. On the other
side, it opposes the hurtful Active-
nesse, because it works not so much
by Naturall Motion as by pure
Faith, which is supernaturall, and
an infused vertue; nor so much by
Man, as by this Being and this All,
who with his glory, inspiration,
and Light smiting and allarming
her up, trumpets upon her walls
I am here.

The Imperfections whereby we
may faile in this pure Remem-
brance

brance are declared Chap. 12. which may be all drawn to these 2. heads, to Adde and to Diminish. For, to diminish, *i.* to be lesse employed then in a sole, pure and simple Remembrance, is to slide into one of the Extreame, the False Rest. For, no Man can doe lesse but hee that's layd dull and halfe asleepe.

To adde also, *i.* to joyne other Selfe-Acts whereby to come nigher to God then we thinke we can do by this Naked Faith and Remembrance, is to fall into the other extreame of Hurtfull working.

For, he that thus betakes himselfe againe to his own Acts, goes as far backe as he that being unaccustomed to work nakedly and supernaturally by true & pure faith, and not finding there his old staffe of feeling, grows male-contented with this pure and naked Remembrance, and falls to redouble his

owne manifold Acts, and so withdraws this Being the further from him, by seeking it after so uncouth a manner.

Yet, if at first, for the little practise a Man hath had in the production of such pure working, any act hap to breake out more then a simple Remembrance, the same may be nothing'd by Active Annihilation. And the same directiō belongs also to them in whom this Remembrance seems to imitate Acts. And contrariwise, hee that findes his pulse too slow, let him recover by this simple Remembrance, when his Soule is so falling and drowning. Which Remembrance though I may say, tis rather to be received as the worke of God then as ours; yet that hinders not but we may have it for seeking, since this Divine Being and Light is ever present, and stands at the Doore and knockes.

knockes. And because also that Naked Faith whereby wee behold the same, bides alway in the soule, and is habituall.

And thus, the Intimate working is plaine. For as in the foregoing chapter, the due time and place are shewed where and when the three kinds of working in the practick Love are to be exercised; So, here is declared the manner they are to be done in. And thus tis cleer how the two former Lives are drawne to and practised in this third without shrinking a Jot from the practise thereof down to the other. For, as the Philosopher is not to begin again, and undergoe the Schooles and rules of Grammar: So he that hath wonne the Tower of this Supereminent Will is not to sinke or slide to the two fore-past Lives. Not, that he should neglect outward Workes, but

and the hinderances thereof. 167.

but fulfill them perfectly in this third Life and Will, transforming bodily into ghostly, and the Active Life into the Contemplative, and that not without due respect to the Time, Place, and manner as before.

CHAP. XVI.

That the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is perpetually to be practised, and alway to be had & seene before the eyes of the soule.

AS for the Practise of the Passion according to the condition of this Exercise, it is alway to be held before our eyes as one and the same with this All associate to the Flesh and Nature of Man. Where note well that I say, (one and the same.) For, so shall the Contemplation thereof yeeld abundance of fruit as shall appeare.

But,

But, because many conceit that this Practise and Contemplation of the Passion suites onely with young pupills, and such as converse only in the Active Life, but not in the Supereminent, supposing it most excellent to adhere to the Deitie by perfect Union:

'Tis therefore a matter of high Consequence in our present purpose, to say somewhat thereof. And though the Brevity whereto I confine my selfe in this Manuall do scarce permit the thread of our discourse to be spun longer, yet in asmuch as the Passion is so inevitable that it makes an Essential part of this Rule; I may not passe it in silence, the rather because the Devotion of many, and the wavering of some about the resolution hereof, requires thus much.

And for the first point, to secure them that the Passion ought alway

alway to be had before our eyes,
 tis plaine by that of *Exodus*. And
 looke that thou make it like the
 Pattern shewed thee in the Mount:
 Which (say the Fathers) is meant
 of the Passion of Christ. And, how
 ardently God desires to commend
 the Contemplation thereof to us,
 appears;

First, by the word [Looke]
 which awakes us to a solid and
 profound Insight and consideration:
 inasmuch as infinite secrets be
 there inclosed, which bee hidden
 from the outer-eye, and which re-
 maine invisiible without a good,
 exact, watchfull, long, and through-
 sighted sight, not in the Active and
 Illuminate Life, but even in the
 Contemplative, which also will
 scarcely prove quicke and cleere e-
 nough to comprehend them, but
 even twinkle in weaknesse in be-
 holding and conceiving the same.

I

Besides

Besides, since GOD is there, (though in form of Man) tis most iust and godly that every where we give him protound adoration and honour. For, what soule can endure when shee sees God upon earth, to slight his acquaintance there, and fling away to abstraction? Or with what face or piety can she turne her back on him, hanging on the Crosse, to hunt for pleasures, he remaining in paines?

Urias wisely considering that the Arke of God dwelt in Tents, utterly refused comfort, saying; The Arke of God, and Israel, and Judah rest in Tents, and my Lord *Joab*, and the servants of my Lord encamp in the open field: and shall I goe into my house to eat & drink and lie with my Wife? How much more ought we to forsake comfort (so far as it depends on us and our seeking) yea and from God doubt-
ble

ble rewarded) to bear a part with
the Living Arke of God, wherein
God himself is inclosed; yea which
is God himselfe?

When King *David* out-worne
with woes, clumbe gasping to the
Top of the Mount of *Olives* bare-
foote ; the Princes yeelded them-
selves his comforts ; How then can
we doe lesse to the Immortall God
our King, then they to their Mor-
tall Man?

Also, these words, Make it after
the patterne, expresse that Ingage-
ment wee stand in of bearing the
Passion of Christ alway before our
eyes. For, as a Painter about to
frame an Image to the life accor-
ding to the Type, is tyed alway to
hold the same before his eyes ; So
is it with us in the Passion, which
is our Pattern and Prototype. E-
very Christian is a Painter. His
hands and fingers are the Pencill :

His colours many vertues & good workes. Himselfe is the Image hee is to draw, where colour must be laid upon colour, and vertue added to vertue; They shall goe from strength to strength until the Image be brought to perfection. Which the better to accomplish, this Pattern is alway to be had before his eyes. And Painter-wise to fixe his eye on the Prototype at every draught of the Pencill of Vertue, Wel-doing, or suffering, not moving a jot without a sight of the same, lest the Image should rebound unlike. And because our whole Life is spent in painting, and inducing new glories to this Image, it followes that this pattern is never to be abandoned to death.

Jacob stucke twi-straked rodde before the eyes of his sheepe, and so made them bring forth Lambes like varioussly speckled. And our heavenly

heavenly *Jacob* and good shepherd
sets before the eyes of our soules
the varieties of the Vertues of his
Passion, that we may produce the
like.

Againe, this Patterne was shew-
ed in the Mount: whence you may
gather the wondrous height of this
Mysterie, as also how much their
Judgement is besotted, who
suppose they have wonne the top
thereof in the Active and Illumi-
nate Life: as if either the toppe of
this Mount were not passing high,
or as if in this Mysterie consisted
not the most sublime Contempla-
tion.

Our Lord commanded that both
the posts of the Children of Israels
houses should be sprinkled with
the blood of the Lambe; shewing
that hee would have us so ever
mindfull of the blood and Passion
of that Lamb which taketh away

the Sinnes of the World, that we could neither enter our Inner house by Contemplation, nor goe out by Action, but we should have this blood and Passion before our eyes. Which command is also resembled in that which he gave to the children of Israel, whom he enjoined to write his Laws upon the gates of their houses that they might alway remember them.

The letter *T.* representing the Crosse, imprinted on the foreheads of mourners in *Jerusalem*, signifies also the same Remembrance which God would have us beare of his Passion : as when he commanded the Children of Israel to carry his Law before their eyes, hee would that they should never forget the same.

The Scarlet thread hung up in *Rababs* window, teacheth us that tis Gods will we should hang up his Crosse

Crosse and bloody Passion in the Window of our Inner house (our understanding) that so we may alway muse on, and behold the same.

And surely, he that well weighs with himselfe the Magnificence of that supream Majesty, and how unsearchable a secret it is that such royalty and omnipotency should suffer so bitter sorrows, and that to no other end but to be an example to us; he shall easily grant that the whole space of our Life is most excellently spent in beholding this Mysterie.

When God spake to *Jeremiah*, he gave him this charge: *Goe down into the Potters house, and there thou shalt heare my words*; Now, who shall wee say this Potter is, but the Son of God that frames those earthen vessells, Men? And which should be his Mansion-house or

l. 4 work-

Worke-house but his Man-hood; where, by the power of his Passion, he repaires and renews the Instruments marr'd and broken? If therefore we wait that God should speake to, and direct us in the wayes of the highest Perfection and Contemplation, then are we not to pry up to his Deity alone, but to meek our selves to his Man-hood and Passion: For there hee hath promised to speake to us. There, (saith he) thou shalt heare my words.

When *Naomi* counselled *Ruth* what she had to doe to compasse the Marriage of her rich Cousin *Booz*, she willed her to marke the place where he used to sleepe, and having uncovered his feete by heaving up the utmost rindge of the Coverlet whereunder he reposed himself, there to lay her self down, and so she should come to know of him

him what the should do. This *Nami* teaching *Ruth* decipheres Wisdom which informs the Soule. Rich *Booz* personates Jesus Christ, who is rich in all, and who is next of kin to the soule as to her whole Nature he hath assumed. The place where he sleeps is the Crosse. The Covering, his Man-hood. The utmost and lowest rindge of the Covering towards the feet, is his Passion, full of Ignominies which he suffered towards the end and last of his Life. And this is that utmost border which we are to detect and turn up by Contemplation, where the Royall Kinglinesse of the Divine Majestie will be found. And there is the Soule to cast her selfe downe as another *Mary Magdalen* at the feete of Jesus, where he will shew her what's to be done, that she may present her self worthy to be his Spouse.

Our Lord wills us being called to the Wedding, to chuse to our selves the lowest roome : Sit down (saith he) *in the lowest seate.* And after, he that invited thee will say, *Come up higher.*

This Marriage is that of the Lambe, whereof tis said, *Blessed are they that are called to the Supper of the Lamb.* When therefore we are invited thither by Contemplation, we are to take the lowest place of least respect, which is that of his Passion, so shall we appear worthy to heare that word *Come up higher.*

But too too little humility resides in that soul, which slighting our Lords Passion, will presse up to his Godhead alone. And surely she does her self no little disadvantage thereby : For, in time of tribulation, adversity, and affliction, she is found supportlesse, and so fluttering in the aire, is tost to
and

and fro by the tempests violence.

Paul seems to write nothing but the Passion ; in Preaching to extol no other thing but the Passion : in the Passion alone to seek matter of rejoycing , to glory only in the Crosse, and to be all-transformed into this Divine Passion : yea acknowledgeth himself to know no more but *Jesus Christ* & him crucified.

CHAP. XVII.

That God and Man is to be beheld in the Passion (the God-head & Manhood seen together with a single eye) as one, not as two.

ANd here the Manhood is not to be beheld alone , but also the Godhead therewith, wherein many faile , looking either on the Manhood alone, or sometimes on it, and sometimes on the God-head

head, as on two diuers objects. And so it comes that some begin to falter, thinking it to be in manner no other Mylterie, but only in beholding the Manhood to phansie a Man tortured with cruel torments upon a Crosse; and after, to finde the Godhead, forsaking the same object, they presse up to some other, whereby to behold the Godhead; not beleewing they can bee rais'd to both at once, the which indeed pertaines to the highest practise. For, to see God and Man in one simple sight, is not unlike to that knowledge whereby God and Man is seene to make one, and the same person.

This Contemplation of God & Man seemes prefigured in that brazen Serpent, whose alone sight cur'd the beholders of their bitings by other serpents. A miracle indeed that God should give such power
of

of healing to the looke of a Serpent : Nor doubt I but he would insinuate to us thereby the admirable vertue inclosed in that celestiall Serpent which is Jesus Christ crucified, as he calls himselfe, inas- much as when wee rightly behold the Manhood crucified, we instantly behold his Godhead which is God himselfe, the finall cure of all evill.

For, how can we continue sensible of sorrow or crosse, when we see God himselfe bearing the same Crosse ? *Blessed are the pure in heart* with our Lord, *because they shall see God* : The which divers holy men affirm to be wholly in the next life, and partly in this. If therefore we see God on the Crosse, we are entred on part of our Blisse in this Life, and consequently cannot feel the pangs of the Crosse.

'Twas a thing unheard of, and
which

which with many transcended all
beliefe, that out of a hard rocke at
the second smite of the Rod, such
plenty of water streamed out. This
Rocke is Christ Jesus, (But the
Rocke was Christ) whose Passion,
though it appeare so stonie, that at
the first sight it yeelds no more but
all harsh, hard, and full of afflicti-
ons ; yet if you smite the same
twice by Contemplation of the
Godhead and Manhood, you shall
finde an overflowing Inundation
of waters of Comfort, a torrent of
Joy, & a swift gushing river flow-
ing from the face of God.

Ezekiel saw a Booke written
without and within, intimating to
us thereby, that Jesus Christ the
Booke of Life is written within
and without, both sides contain-
ing the same perfections: O ra-
vishing Booke! O Miracle! O pro-
digy! O new and unusuall thing,

tran-

transcending and passing all Reason, and far surmounting the territories of Mans capacity, that all the Attributes of God proper to his Divine Majesty, should bee described in our mortall flesh: That all the internall pefections of God should be depainted in Man, and to know that person as perfect as God, yea to be God himselfe! O booke (I say) beyond admiration even to astonishment, wherein the eternall omnipotency is described in externall impotency; Immortality in Mortality; Spirit in Body; Glory in Ignominy; Freedom in Bondage, and God in Man. A booke where without is written and displayed to the eyes of all men whatsoever the Eternall Father from everlasting either said or thought. A booke shewing us the Crosse a Tribunall, the Passion a Throne, and Death the Triumph

umph of Je: Christ. A booke, where
 of one faith, O wondrous power
 of the Crosse! O unspeakable glory
 of the Passion, wherein is both the
 Throne of our Lord, the judgment
 of the World, and conquest of
 Christ crucified. This is the booke
 wherein all contrary propositions
 are reconciled, & without distinction
 made all one; where the outer
 thing is truly knowne the inner;
 bodily, spiritual; weaknes strength,
 Sorrow, Joy; Contempt,
 Majesty; Shame, Glory; Little-
 nesse, Greatnesse; Poverty, Rich-
 nesse; Bondage, Freedome; and
 Torments, Delights. But, out alas
 for pity; who beleeves all this?
 Or who is it that with a simple
 heart gives credit to these things?
 where is wisdom found? or what
 place is left for understanding?
 Here is Wisedome and Patience of
 the Saints, even in seeing and pra-
 ctising

Glifing those things wch belong to the Passion: And here God proved them at the waters of contradiction: wch waters of Life they extract out of that Celestial & flinty rock whilst they smite it with the rod of Christian Discipline. Who is wise and he wil keepe these things.

It may truly bee said that the booke and passion is no other but the gate of Heaven, and the house of God. And though in this Passion he made darkenesse his Pavillion; neverthelesse, as is his darkenesse, so also his light.

Jacobs Ladder though the one end toucht heaven and the other earth, yet both made but one Ladder: even so, the person of Jesus Christ which liv'd on earth by his Manhood and endured those torments in his Passion, was no other then that selfe-same second person in the Trinity, living ever glori-

ous in the Heavens.

Moses saw God in the midst of the thorny bush, signifying to us that God himselfe is found in his painefull and thorn-crowned Passion, and not to be sought without the same.

No marvell then if Saint *Paul*, the Doctor of the Gentiles and trumpet of truth al over the world exhausted all his wisdom from no other fount but out of the Abyss of this wisdom and knowledge, as himselfe acknowledgeth, saying; *I desire to know nothing among you but Iesus Christ crucified.* Which yet, was so farre from vailing him from high Revelations, that as himselfe witneseth, he was rapt to the third Heaven. Whence it is cleerer then the Noone-day Light, that in the crucified Manhood, he also saw the boundlesse depth of the Godhead.

But the Centre of all this Difficulty consists in the right sending forth of this Simple sight, whereby God and Man is seene (neither omitted.) For, in failing of either, we incurre a like losse: The depth of the Mysterie being founded in both one, and not in each apart. For, first, to behold God Omnipotent, and then a miserable and forlorn Man, which he became by his Incarnation; This worketh somewhat in the soule by way of Consideration: But to see both one (as wee have said) and to behold it with a single eye, and naked aspect, that strikes the soule with amazement, and bereaves her of all her forces. And this is that simple and perfect Contemplation which our Lord extolls with so many prayes in his Spouse in the *Cantic*. *Thy eyes are Doves eyes. i. simple ones.* And againe when he saith: *If thy eye bee single*

angle, my whole body shall be Light.

And all the Impediment of this Contemplation arises from no other but a Contradiction seeming to darken the reason of Man, that so it is disabled to behold in one simple sight, God and Man; Body and Spirit. For, to behold the Manhood which is corporeall, an Image must bee let in. To behold the Godhead, no Forme, but pure Denudation. So then, to see both one, seemes as if you would say, Receive a forme and no forme. And this to many is a stumbling stone.

But, now to unty this Knot: we are to transcend all Reason, & flye to Faith, which seeing him Man, stands invincible, that hee is God without all forme and Image whatsoever. And though Imagination inject the forme Man, yet Faith (disdaining all sense) considers

ders no forme, fastning her eye on
God. So that, though an Idea of
Jesus Christ crucified present it self
to us, yet the Ocean of Faith
drownes and annihilates the same.

CHAP. XVIII.

*That this Passion is to be praetised and
beheld as it is in our selves, rather
then that which is considered at Je-
rusalem, or in some Place remote
from us.*

IT being now concluded that the
Soule in beholding the Passion,
knowes God and Man in one and
the same Person; another doubt
assailles her, and that no small one,
whether tis more excellent to be-
hold him as crucified under that
forme which useth to be given him
as suffering at Jerusalem, or under
that Actuall sorrow, bitternesse,
and affliction, which every one
tasts

tafts in himfelfe. Wherein I had rather play the part of a Scholler then a Matter. Yet, under correction, for fo much as I could ever gather by proof out of the little praftife which yet I have had herein (though both the wayes be excellent, yet) the latter appears to mee much worthier then the former; yet, not for all men, but onely thofe that are found capable thereof. And that for the reasons I fhall produce, where firft I wil fhew that this praftife is orthodox with Holy Writ and Theology.

Know then that our fufferings are espoufed to thofe of our Saviour Christ, and made one and the fame with his Paflion : And that for many caufes and refpects.

First, by Union of will and fpirit. He that cleaves to God is one fpirit : whence it comes that our fufferings are common. For, in
what

what degree our spirit hath Communion with the Spirit of God, God againe by fervour of Love, & Compassion, answerably beares our sorrowes. Wherefore he saith to Saul : *Why persecutest thou me?* He said not my friends or servants, but mee, i. whose members they are. For, *I am the Vine, and yee the branches.* And as the same radicall moysture is common to Boale and branches; so is the feeling of sorrowes and sufferings to Christ and Christians. Which though indeede they are to be understood, and that Christ in his own person doth not suffer them, yet tis he that suffers. For, though tis to bee conceiv'd that he suffers in his members, yet he suffers (as himselfe testifies,) because his members make a part of himselfe. Our sufferings therefore (not as ours, but as Jesus Christs) may be honoured with profound
Re-

Reverence, (a strange saying) yea, so they ought to be by those that discern him in them as in his own Passion. For, if he be so worthily honoured with so much devotion in his Image upon the Crosse, why may he not be adored in the lively Crosse of sorrowes in our selves? And if in those the honour be not given to the Crosse, but to himself, Much more is it there, where not by Representation alone, but also by grace and the same sufferings he is present.

Paul accounted his owne sufferings the sufferings of Christ, when he said: I fill up what is wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh, for his Body which is the Church. And *Chrysostome* upon this place saith; He was not ashamed to call them his sufferings.

'Tis the use of those that be perfect to see God in all things. How much

) yea, much more then in sorrows, which
 se that let before us his Passion, where he
 s own is particularly present, saying, *I*
 rtibly *am with him in Tribulation?* For,
 votion though the crucified Manhood bee
 e, why not really there as is the Godhead
 lively it selfe, yet is it to be beheld as in
 selves? a Looking-glasse, and united to
 be not the soule by union of grace and
 himself, love after her example that said, *A*
 ere not *bundle of Myrrhe, my beloved shall*
 ut also *lie between my breasts.* This belo-
 ings he ed is Christ, a bundle of bitter
 Myrrhe, his passion compact of ma-
 e suffe- ny afflictions, as a bundle is of ma-
 , when ny stalkes. And because Christ is
 ting of in some sort always in his Passion,
 y flesh, he soul lul'd hi n as a Bridegroom
 church. between her Breasts, when she em-
 place rac't him in the same Passion.
 o call Now 'tis plaine that she had not in
 er selfe that passion and sorrowes
 be per- which he suffered in himselfe long
 How ter; *Ergo* they were hers which
 much K thee

shee reputed her Beloveds, being conjoynd and promiscuous with his through Love, as the paines of any Member with those of the head it selfe.

Besides, God is neerer to us then our selves. Nor can we see or discern him so neer, but he is still infinitely neerer; nor so intimate to us and our substance, but he is still more intimate. For, tis he (say the Fathers) that gives himselfe to thy mind more intimate, then thy own most intimate. And so may he bee beheld and adored, and that with most profound devotion, if he be there discerned: And whosoever refuses is worse then an Ethnick.

'Tis said before, that wee are commanded to make all after the patterne shewed in the Mount, which is Jesus Christ crucified on Mount Calvary. And of what wood is this Image or forme to be made,

made, but of our selves? And where are we to beare it ingraven, but in our selves, after the example of him that said : *I am crucified with Christ*; and who exhorted; *Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ*? When therefore we be made his lively Image, who can say that the same (as 'tis such) is not to be beheld and re-
 ferenced?

Moreover, the same Trueth is confirmed by all places of Scripture, where God is said to be in us; know ye not that your members are the Temple of the holy Ghost, which is in you, and ye are not your owne. *Ye are the Temple of the living God* God saith; *For I will dwell and walk in them: We will come & make our abode with him.* He that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him; *For in him we live, and have our Being.*

Nor can it be objected that this

is only meant of the God-head, since this Godhead belongs to Christ, and is one and the same person with his Manhood. So that when I see Christ alonely in the one, I both may and ought to behold him in both together: because they can never be severed. What he once put on, he never laid off. For, as, while hee conversed on earth, his Manhood alone was seene, and yet his Godhead was therein considered; So, now discerning his Godhead, we cannot in Mind separate, nor ought we to forget his Manhood, which even now lives in the Heavens: but to bring it in to the Object of Contemplation together with his Godhead, that we may found this unspeakable Mysterie of his Incarnation. Which object of his Manhood, though it be neither essentially nor Sacramentally present, nathlesse by U-

an
 l-head,
 ings to
 me per-
 So that
 in the
 t to be-
 because
 hat he
 ff. For,
 a earth,
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 in con-
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 d sepa-
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 w lives
 g it in-
 lation,
 l, that
 eakable
 Which
 ough i
 Sacra-
 e by U-
 nion

nion of grace, Bond of Love, Dia-
 pason of Will, Conjunction of the
 Members with the Head, and rela-
 tion of the Image of our sufferings
 to the patterne, hee is some way
 present by an admirable presence.
 This *Paul* desires we should under-
 stand, and is fervently zealous to
 confirme the same Trueth, saying,
I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in
me. Seeke yee a proove of Christ
speaking in mee? Bearing about in
our body the Dying of the Lord Jesus.
Till Christ bee formed in you Let
this mind be in you which was also in
Christ Jesus. I am crucified with
Christ. Because wee are his members
of his Flesh and of his Bones. Yee are
the body of Christ, and members
in particular. Know ye not that your
Members are the Temple of the holy
Ghost which is in you? So many of
you as are baptized have put on Christ.
Christ Jesus is in you unlesse ye bee re-

probares. And many other places, whereby he shews his earnest Desire to teach Christians this Wisdome, and particularly in this last sentence, where he seemes to inforce that he will have us beleieve it, proposing this necessity of having Christ in us, or else of being reprobated from him.

I could here bring authorities of many Fathers if the Brevity of this Manuall would permit: Since then Christ Jesus is in us, and where he is he is to be adored, it followes that he is to be adored in our selvs, and thereupon a holy Father saith, 'Tis more excellent to behold him crucified in our selves then at Jerusalem. And one holy Saint considered the Passion of Christ our Lord in his members, so much, that he was no lesse pained when he saw any other afflicted, then if he had seene Christ himselfe in the same plight.

Yea,

Yea, our sufferings not onely may be beheld as the sorrowes of Jesus Christ, but sometimes they cannot be beheld otherwise. I mean, when through fervour of Love our sorrowes be so commixt and united to the sorrows of sweete Jesus, that we may see him alike in both; neither can ours be separated from his, there can be but one onely Christ in both made one (ours expiring in his.) Nor otherwise in the one then in the other can honour be given to him, since wheresoever he is seene and discerned, all adoration and glory is due to him in the sorrows themselves.

Having concluded then that 'tis true that we may behold Christ Jesus in our selves, it rests that wee shew why the same is more worthy then to imagine and behold him suffering at Jerusalem.

That reall suffering which wee

tast in our selves , presents a farre more spritely Image of the Passion of Jesus Christ , then that which hovers in Imagination alone. And that which we feele inwardly, then that which is speculated outwardly. As our owne headach or paine of any other member, gives us a far more lively feeling of the like affliction in any of our friends, then if we fancied the same from here-say alone. Just so , my owne experience of the torments of Christ in my selfe , makes mee abundantly more sensible of them, then if I saw them onely by apparition in my phantasie. Whereof one saith : By suffering, a man learns to co-suffer with him that suffers.

If in our sorrows we behold the Passion without, us that seemes to beget Multiplicity, the Soule straining from her owne paines to the pains of Christ, but beholding the
Passion

Passion of Christ in our selves, wee see but one onely simple object of the paines of both.

And thus this whole practise is drawn into our interiour: And we have the work within us, the wch is an high step. To see the Passion in our sorrows, the Conflict is excellent. But to behold the same in our selves presupposes absolute victory. Againe, the end for which we behold the Passion is, to be conformed thereto. But thus, by seeing the Passion in our sorrows, we are conformed thereto by a joyfull and free willing acceptation of the same in the Union and Contemplation of the sufferings of Christ. Ergo, by beholding the Passion in our sorrowes wee reach the end of the Contemplation of the Passion. Besides, many cannot, but very hardly and without continuance, behold the Passion of Christ in I-

K 5 magination:

· imagination : But, none need misse the same by feeling in his own sorrows. For, many are destitute of apprehensive Imagining : but none wants the lively sense of his owne afflictions.

Againe, if being round set with straits, wee flye to the Passion of Christ without us ; we shal seem to turn our back plainly on sorrows, and to shrink from paines so far as we can, pressing to him more to seeke our own Comfort then for any true Love to him. But, when we see him in our paines within our selves, we easily embrace the bitternesse as his, and cheerefully pursue the Cuttingnesse of affliction, as that which nailes us with him on the Crosse.

The Union made by those sufferings which are in us, is so much the closer, the more wee taste the Gall : And the truer and perfecter,
the

the more truly those paines bee in that Union, and not in memory alone.

If in our Paines wee consider the Passion, the more we suffer, the closer wee shall be united to God. But if we behold it without us, the Tempest of affliction may breake that Union with him. And therefore 'tis most excellent, saith the same Saint, to behold him in his Passion within our selves.

Confirm'd therefore on holy Scriptures produc't, let us bide solidly fixt in our own paines as in the Torments of Jesus Christ, rejecting all loosenesse, wavering, & all questions arising, to inquire whether the Passion of Christ bee truly in them or no. Such as for the most part a Soule shallow illuminate useth to frame. The which practise he may easily stand unshaken in, that is truly faithful to the Crosse;

Crosse ; who with all his heart embraces Tribulation , never languishing for comfort. For, in so doing, the presence of Jesus Christ by grace shall never be doubted of, because he will there nakedly unvail himselfe.

Nor ought any man to give himselfe to this practise till first hee be wain'd from the Dug of consolation, and tempered to endure the edge of bitternesse. Nor want there some that would wish to suffer with Christ on the Crosse, but led with Intention that those stones should be made bread:and the Gall suddenly chang'd into Honey, dreaming all the while that they follow the Crosse, which with all their might they avoid. Which makes them as far from discerning Jesus Christ, as there is difference betwixt to quake at the Crosse and to honour it : or to loath it as a Serpent,

Serpent, and to welcome it as a desired good. Above all, tis chiefly remarkable that to finde Christ in his Passion in us, we must see nothing but dolours and afflictions. For, he that should seeke, yea or entertain sensible Comfort, should open a free passage to Illusions.

Let therefore all our paines and tribulations be welcommed, not as crosses, but as Jesus Christ. Let him be considered and beheld as crucified in us. Let all our sorrowes, afflictions, and evils whatsoever of body or of soule, bee cast into the burning fornace and flames of the Torments of Jesus, where they may be all consummate and united to his sorrowes. So may we truly say with the Apostle, *I am crucified with Christ.* And follow his exhortation, *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.* Nor let any turn it to presumption thus to know

know & behold God in our pains:
But rather let him see how that the
Inventory of al vertues is infolded
therein, which Truth it selfe ac-
companies and confirms.

And first, a perfect Selfe-denyall
here shoves it self, which not on-
ly constraines a Man setting aside
all selfe-seeking to beare patiently
afflictions, reproaches, and bitter-
nesses, but also to welcome them
joyfully, & to accept them as high
favours. There appeares also in
that soule an invincible Faithful-
nesse towards her Cœlestial Bride-
groom, inasmuch as she acknow-
ledges him not only in himselfe,
but also in his Creature, embracing
him in the thicket of thorny affli-
ctions, in Littlenesse looking up to
Greatnesse, and adoring him in re-
proaches and forlornnesse. And
now I say, what a wondrous relin-
quition is found in this practise
where

where the Cup is thus received ?
What Unconquerednesse , where
tis thus supt off ? What a patience
in this Endurance ? What undis-
maidnesse in thus casting her selfe
among the Thorns ? What a flame
of Love where thus she head-longs
her selfe into the fornace of Tri-
bulations ? What a strange con-
stancy in thus refusing to goe forth ?
Yea, annihilating her selfe that God
may be exalted in her heart, as 'tis
said, Man shall goe to a high mind
and God shall bee exalted. And
lastly, where, that Christ may live,
the soule chuses to dye , as they
that said, We received the sentence
of Death within our selves.

Nor can Presumption take any
place in us, because there we discern
the Passion of our Lord. For, be-
fore we can so discern him , wee
must be as farre estranged from our
selves, as from all other things, by
an

an absolute Selfe-denyall , and by hearty embracing of bitterneffe and affliction. Nor, can we there think our selves to be any thing because of the presence of God, whom we behold within us.

Notwithstanding, though I take this practise for the more perfect , yet since divers men have divers devotions, I would not tye al sorts of Soules to this way , especially those that stand not yet in high favour in the Godhead , though otherwise they have growne up in spirituall Life. For , such cannot perfectly discern how God is in their Afflictions.

There be also some events wherein 'tis requisite to behold the Passion of our Lord in himself, as when no occasion presents it selfe of beholding his Passion in our selves, neither by affliction , bitterneffe, nor any contradiction. For,
though

though an Illuminate Man can hardly want occasion to practise it in himselfe, sometimes by acceptation of bitternesse, sometimes by refusing of pleasure, bodily or spirituall: yet sometimes it happens that either no such is presented, or else tis so little, and almost of no moment, that it beates scarce any or no impression in the Soule, so that the Passion of Jesus Christ cannot be discerned in her.

Also in making a long prayer. For, then such floods of Divine influences streame into the Soul, that all sense of affliction, contradiction & bitternes is spent, & no impressiō of them left in the Soule: So that she cānot see the Passion in her self.

Lastly, the Passion of Christ cannot be seene in our selves when the soule is so sublimely rayscd, and findes the Passion so perfectly in her selfe, that she cannot but behold

hold that Passion which Christ suffers in her and that which hee suffered in himselfe to be but only one. For then shee sees his paynes sometimes in himselfe, sometimes in her self without difference. Et-foons also almost al the stations of the Passion at once without multiplicity, (a matter of high moment) yet nothing letted by variety of the formes; because shee sees God alone in them all.

CHAP. XIX.

What this Image ought to be, and how tis to be beheld.

NOW come wee to see what a one this Image ought to be whereunder we behold the Passion. And first, I say, if it bee the Image of the paines of Christ our Lord himselfe, it need not be universall, (I meane of the whole Passion) but
of

of some particular part thereof, that so it may bide printed in the heart and imagination, without which impression it falls from the memory, and so must that contemplation which depends thereon. But, if that Image be of his paynes in us, then may it well be universal of all the dolours and afflictions, inasmuch as the impression of our feeling makes us alwaies remember them; yet chiefly, wee are to apply ourselves to the heaviest of them, for there will Jesus shew himselfe most, because wee there finde our selves least.

Besides, if wee deale with the Passion of our Lord in himselfe, it must be imaginary, but if wee behold it as it is in our selves, it is not then to be imagined, but beheld just such as wee really feele in our selves.

But whether of the two soever
it

it be, wee must neither adde nor detract one jot from the forme thereof: but without the least alteration, to receive the same exactly as it offers it selfe. Where many erre, longing to change them both into another more exquisite, sublime and godlike, despising as it were that simple and naked forme of Christ crucified that first presents it selfe to the eye, as too base, earthly, corporeall, and having almost nothing divine or excellent therein: where, flat contrary, the more vile and forlorne the image or forme is whereunder we behold the Almighty crucified; the more stupendous will the mystery appeare, and the soule bee the higher raised; which is most remarkable.

The same I say also of that forme which is in our selves not by imagination, but by tasting of sorrow,
heaviness

heavinesse and bitternesse, bodily
or spirituall : that it behoves us to
rest therein content, neither alte-
ring it by our owne industry, nor
languishing to have it changed in-
to another forme by infusion of a-
ny sweetnesse or consolation.
Where many deceive themselves,
who tossed with the waves of un-
faithfulnesse & sensuality, seem to
say to our Lord ; If thou beest the
Son of God, command that these
stones of hard affliction bee made
bread of comfort. In this hunting
for comfort appeares sensuality :
in saying, [If thou be the Sonne of
God] unfaithfulnesse shewes her
selfe ; as indeede it befalls too of-
ten that the soule seeing such an
image or bitternesse, growes in-
tangled and doubts whether God
be there or no ; or whether shee
ought to honour and behold him
under such a forme, and thereupon
to

to free her selfe of all doubting, the
sinks to take some prooff thereof
by tasting some sweetnesse, and by
changing those stones of Affliction
into Bread of Comfort. Or else
seeing him upon the Crosse tho-
row meane esteem and debasement
impos'd upon us, hurried with
Temptation of Infidelity; we say
[*If thou beest the Sonne of God*] to
whom (under what forme soever
appearing) adoration belongs.
Come downe from the crosse. Let mee
see this Manhood advanc't upon
so high a Crosse of Contempt,
come down an assume some other
shape more lightsome, glorious,
Majesticall, and becomming the
Son of God; and then I will be-
leeve thee. Thus for want of live-
ly faith and desire to suffer, Un-
faithfulnesse and sensuality hang
alwayes after the Taste of some
sweetnesse, requiring a change in-
to

to some more spritely and radiant forme wherein to behold Jesus Christ. Which is the very cause why they cannot discern him, and that they incur extream disadvantage in the Practise of the Passion.

To prevent which mischief, we must behold such contempt or anxiety absolutely as we feel it, and just in the same measure; looking therein on Christ crucified; or on the other manner just as we imagine him suffering on Mount Calvary, and there confesse him with a simplified and invincible faith.

Moreover, such form of Bitternesse or Contempt is not onely simply and faithfully to bee welcom'd, but the very Cuttingnesse thereof to be grasped, by him that will tread the steps of Christ crucified. I call that Cuttingnesse which paineth and bireth sorest, arising from a Triple kind of Afflictions;
Tempo-

Temporall, Bodily, Spirituall. Every of which afflicts the Spirit through bitterneſſe and contradiction of Nature. And this inward bitterneſſe I call the Cuttingneſſe of affliction, which we are principally to hold, embrace, and purſue, as the Key which opens up the Cloſet-doore of the Treasures of Divine Wiſedome, and diſcloſes the profound Miſteries of this Paſſion. Which ſharpeſſe, if it bee blunted by Conſolation, is to be edg'd again by recording thoſe afflictions; which if wee neglect by ſinking to Conſolation, the ſoule ſhall never be through lighted by the Divine Wiſedome. And here many ſoules falter, at firſt indeed beholding Chriſt in their or his ſorrowes; but as ſoone as ever hee ſhewes himſelfe to them after their own Deſire and as themſelves wiſh, they let themſelves ſlide into a
Con-

Contemplation of Christ alone without the Crosse, leaving his bitter sufferings behind them, and so they never come to dive and sound the depth of this Myserie, nor to learn the admirable and unknown Wisdome hid therein. For, this bitterneffe of Affliction is that whereof 'tis said, Affliction gives Understanding. 'Tis the Gall restoring the sight philm'd with the hart of the world, and the Eye-olive to smeare the eyes that they may see cleerer.

And now the Soule seated in this state, is to behold God in that former verity as if shee saw him in heaven without any difference. Nor ought she to lust to see him otherwise, but rather count her self happy (though too too unworthy) of admittance to see her God in such humility, and in that humility to discern the heights of this
L Myserie.

Myſterie. Above al, let her be wary ſhe aſpire not to a ſenſible Union, but wholly betake her ſelfe to the Impregnable rock of lively Faith. Nor let her raiſe her Minde higher then to the height of this Forſakenneſſe, wherein if ſhee valiantly abide confident and ſolid, ſhe ſhall not fail to finde the moſt Higheſt: Nor let her ſeek or deſire God, but ſecurely beleeve ſhe has found him. Nor let her behave her ſelfe otherwiſe then as ſtanding before his Throne; Nor let her doubtinly waver, but ſticke to Trueth; not truſting Senſe, but Faith: Nor, let her turne her ſelfe inward, but annihilate her ſelfe before God. Nor let her produce any Intellectuall Act, but only reſt ſatisfied with this ſimple ſight & lively Remembrance of this great Al crucified, as we have ſhewed in the 10th. & 13th Chap. And let her yeeld her ſelfe a
meere

meere patient, all prostrate to be handled after his Divine pleasure, whether he please to draw her and shew himselfe by some glittering ray of his glory, or else let her continue as she is. And chiefly let her beware that shee behave not her selfe workingly towards him, but above all that she attempt not one jot to alter that simple form wherein he appears to her; it being his worke to transforme her through that forme, and to fashion her after his good pleasure. And note well that those desires of seeing God in another manner, is the very and only cause that the Soule can never see him Wonderful as he is, because those desires interrupt her Constancy and solid rest in that form, debarring the profound Adoration & Honour due to him yea, making void that Faith whereby God is beleev'd to be there.

And lastly in the presence of Christ we have need of Patience.

These then be the Imperfections which steale upon us in this Practise. All which may easily bee avoided if we waver not in the very foundation of Faith ; beleeving Christ crucified to be what hee is. For , thus wee shall see our selves nothing, and him all , who will draw us to himselfe and nothing us ; Hee being that Rod of *Aaron*, which lifted up in the Wildernesse of this World, draws all to him.

CHAP. XX.

The Passion not to be forsaken for Contemplation of the Godhead alone, though the same should be offered us: that so we may be confirmed by Jesus Christ.

ANd now the soule having won thus high, and established in

in the practise of the Passion : Another doubt arises within her touching the Contemplation of the same, *i.* whether she is to forsake it to rise to the Godhead alone.

And indeed, many there be who casting one glance at the Passion, long strait to mount to the Godhead; Others disrespecting the Passion are, as they thinke, directly transported to the Deity by a certaine Transcendence of the Minde, which for the most part I suspect rather Naturall then Supernatural; and Imaginary then reall. I take it (under correction of better judgement) that that Contemplation is most advantagious, high and perfect, which is had in the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and most acceptable to him, and not to bee forsaken for any other how high soever, though such were even offered

ferred to the soule. Which to confirme, I will bring some reasons & authorities of Fathers to prove the same.

1. That we are not to leave the Passion to behold the Godhead; but to behold both together.

2. That we are not to forsake it though a gate seemed to be set open, and the soule to bee lur'd aloft.

3. That the Contemplation of the Passion is the most perfect and highest of all others.

For the first point. We say, since our Life in this World is alway both Active and Contemplative, it needs a light for both. This Light is Christ Jesus. His Godhead illuminates us in Contemplation. It is Manhood shewes Action. And even as he grows slenderly in Contemplation that sees not his Godhead to draw Light therefro; so
neither

neither in Action moves he rightly that proposes not his Manhood for direction. And as in the whole course of our Life, there is alway somewhat to be done, so this Manhood is alway to be borne before our eyes.

Secondly, in Contemplation of the Passion, Fervour and lively flames stirre up to Conformity and operation; but abstract Contemplation of the Godhead alone, produceth no such effect.

Thirdly, in the one God is found in stability of strength and practise as well outer as inner; In the other he is only found in the Inner; but as for the outer, all growes cold, when need requires we goe forth to operation; especially when the same requires any length of time. In the one the soule, when shee should act is left naked, by sinking from her object

whence shee borrowed her Light ; but in the other, shee's not so left, because she retaines the same object in Contemplation that she does in Action.

5. The one acquires us an Interiour, but no exteriour habite: The other enriches us with both.

6. The Contemplation of the Passion containes those two wayes leading to God ; Abnegation and Affection. But the Contemplation of the Godhead , kindles indeed the Affection , but shewes no such practise of Abnegation.

How shall any man be thought to love Jesus Christ , that turnes his back upon him hanging on the Crosse, that so losing sight of him he may give himselfe to Contemplation of the Godhead?

For the second point, wee are not only to cleave fast to the Passion willingly , and with all our might,

might, and not to the Godhead alone: But alſo none ought to let himſelfe be drawne from it; No, though he had ſome Inclination, and a doore ſeemed to ſtand open: For, if upon every call which ſeems to lure aloft, the Paſſion ſhould be left, it would never be poſſible to ſearch out & diſcover the depth of this Myſterie: which, as it is grounded not only in the heighth of the Godhead, but alſo in the forſakennesse of the Manhood, ſo, that it may be thoroughly founded, both muſt be beheld, and not the Godhead alone. For, as one climbing a Tree, cannot conſider the height of it, if he ſtare at the Top only, never looking at the root. So he that by Contemplation aſcends the high Tree of the Myſterie of the Incarnation, cannot poſſibly diſcerne the height of it, if he aym only at the Godhead.

overlooking the forsaken and despised Manhood. And as those two be conjoyned in the same person, so they are to be beheld with one simple sight, and not apart

Where, in my judgement, many erre very much, who finding some Light by beholding the Passion; when by meanes thereof they should dive into the same with a steadier eye, and search deeper to the Intimatest secrets of this stupendous Mysterie, there to finde that supream God cloathed with Mortall Flesh, beaten with stripes, boar'd with nayles, and cruelly fastned to a Crosse, till the ravisht Soule roar'd out, and were forc't to goe forth of her selfe; they on the contrary straight forsake the Manhood, and imboldned by that small glympse they have got, presse to arise to his naked God-head

head, whither nathleſſe they attain not, but leave it as fluttering in the ayre ; Or if they ſeeme to approach it, the ſame is ſo little that the Soule ſoone faints, little bettered thereby, wandring Light-mindedly, untempered to endure the fulgour of Divine Light, but thence held off remains a Vagreſs, growing in no knowledge either of the Godhead alone by abſtraction, or of the Godhead & Manhood together by the Paſſion.

In the Paſſion we finde the glorious Godhead ſuited to our Capacity, which of it ſelfe is a Light inacceſſible. For, as he that would ſee the Sunne, darts not his eyes immediately upon his glistering rayes, but taking a baſon or ſome other veſſell of water, ſits the ſame to his ſight : So may we ſay of the Godhead, which hee that deſires to ſee, muſt hehold it in
the

the Manhood wherein 'tis adapted to the sight of the Soule. And as he that will look'e full at the Sun, rather dazles the quicknesse of his sight (witness they that will look on him in his eclipse) so, those souls which overtopping the Manhood presse to adhere immediately o the Godhead, do no other but blind themselves. Nor let them thinke that God inviteth them to his Naked Godhead when hee imparts that Light; But he gives that Light that they may the better behold his Passion, and not that they should pry up to his naked Godhead: For, if the Manhood were so sleightly to be left to proceed to the Godhead alone, then were it granted and concluded that the Passion is scarce at al to be minded: for, it requires some Light: If then having received that Light, wee must straight flye to the naked God-

Godhead, dismissing the Manhood; What then shall become of the knowledg of this Mysterie, and the Imitation of the pattern of our Life?

But, God by imparting such Light to us, is so farre from inviting us to behold his naked Godhead that contrariwise, hee gives the Soul endeavouring the same, a touch of her mistake, saying: *Turn away thy eyes from me, for they have drove me away.* As if he should say, So long as thou lookedst on my Passion, thou sawst me and enjoyedst me after thy hearts desire; both Manhood and Godhead at once: But since thou withdrewest from thine eyes the glasse of my Passion which proportioned me to thy capableness, and hast betook thee to behold my God-head alone, the lustre of whose sight thy weak eyes are not able to endure, I have withdrawn

drawne my selfe from thy sight
and fled far from thee. Turn then
away thine eyes from me and from
my sole Godhead, and fasten them
on my Passion ; there thou shalt
find me abundantly.

We are not therefore by help of
such Light to soare aloft , though
God impart that Light unto us,
unlesse the Attraction of the holy
Ghost be so Majesticall that it sus-
pend all the powers of the Soule,
as by rapture or extasie. For, then
the soule (her weake forces spent)
must let goe her hold, and yeeld to
the Rapt.

The Angel having wrestled long
and strong with *Jacob* , at length
spying light, said, Let me goe, 'Tis
morning. The Angell represents
our Lord ; *Jacob* the Christian.
Their wrestle, that lowly and love-
ficke duel acted betwixt God and
his Spouse, who finding him in
his

draws not from the Manhood. 231

his Passion, cries out; *I found him whom my soule loveth*; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, consubstantiall with the Father, by whom all things were made. And seeing that great God thus cloathed in our flesh, and therein tortured with Torments, rapt in amazement, and drunke with his Love, fastning her eye on him in this Agony, and now enflam'd with Zeale and Love, shee vowes never to goe thence, but embracing him close, cries out; *I caught him, nor will I let him goe*; And againe with *Jacob*; *I will not let thee goe*. And now his Godhead and Manhood making but one and the same person, she cannot see the one without the other. Now, here begins the wrestle: The sight of his Godhead lures her aloft, the sight of her Manhood holds him fast

fast below. Both which she beholding with one simple sight, is drawn at once both up and down. If she twine from his Manhood, she is taken up by his Godhead: But, because shee had rather see both then the Godhead alone, and how he is both mortall and immortall, great and little, also cleerly discern his Love, Goodnesse, and other perfections and abstruse Mysteries: And lastly because shee desires and burnes to suffer on the Crosse with her Bridegroom, she clings perpetually to his Manhood saying, *I caught him, nor will I let him goe till, &c.* On the other side, God who never withdrawes from her the sight of his Godhead, consequently by the same mounts her aloft, and sweet-speaking her by the Lure, (she fast to the Crucifix) he said, Let me goe, 'tis morning: Behold my Godhead, the Beginning

ning of eternall Life : But she wel-
knowing his delight in her harm-
lesse Nay-say , and how much in-
flaminge 'tis to bind then to loose
him, answers ; *I will not let thee goe*
till thou hast blessed mee ; that I may
behold thee both raining in Hea-
ven, and suffering upon the Crosse,
and as nakedly and perfectly love
and adore thee in the one as in the
other. Then her Lord seeing her
Invincible , and that hee cannot
winde from her by the Lure of his
Godhead because of her wondrous
fidelity & constancy to the Crosse,
he overflows her with his Blessing,
subscribing to all her requests in
the Passion. And there he blest her
in the same place , even of his bit-
ter Passion. In the same place, be-
cause there strength is hid den
under the weaknesse of the Passion.
The Horns which signifie strength,
are in his hand : For there he brake
the

the powers, the Bow, the shield, the sword and the battle of the World, the Flesh and the Devill.

And these Hornes of the Altar are they from which *Joab* could not be forc't to depart; no, though King *Solomon* himself commanded, but chused rather to dye there; intimating that the Passion is never to be forsaken, but persisted in to death, though some thinke that since God hath vouchsafed them a glimmer of the Light of his Godhead, he therefore calls them up, and to forsake the Passion. For, this humility and lowly wrestling with Christ our Lord, joyes him above Measure, even when with al our heart we love the Contempt and lownesse of the Passion, although he seeme to invite us higher. For, then hee double requites that Humility, in that Lownesse revealing the height of his Godhead

draws not from the Manh. od. 135

head. And this he meant when he counselled us being bidden to the Wedding, *to chuse the lowest place*: for then hee calls us, and by the Light imparted doubles his Call incessantly, *Come up*. Not to draw to his Godhead alone by forsaking his Passion, but that he may shew us his Godhead there in the same place, whose sight rayes the soul to the highest without distraction from the lowest.

Urias refused the Banquet and Princely Junkets sent him from King *David*, saying; *The Arke of God, and Israel and Judah remaine in Tents, and my Lord Joab and the servants of my Lord abide in the open field, and shall I goe into my house to eate and drinke?* Intimating mystically, that if in our Contemplation of the Passion of the lively Arke of God, our King let fall some dainties to us from his heavenly Table

ble, we ought not so much to greedy on the sweet meates of Consolation that wee forget him on the Crosse, and that divine Arke, both remaining in so meane a Mansion, and so unworthily entreated; But rather passing by the Comfort with him that said, My soule refused Consolation, we are to lodg therewith, bewailing the Miseries of our sweetest Redeemer, and tasting in Spirit his paines and sorrows.

This Practise *Paul* extols, who though hee abounded with such plenty of Lights, yet profest himselfe to know nothing else but *Jesus Christ* and him crucified. And surely all his writings speake nothing but the Passion, and how himselfe was transformed into it: By which may well bee gathered that he never abandoned it, but all his life nourisht, beheld, and embraced it. For

draws not from the Manhood. 237

For the third point I judge it ea-
sie to confirme that the Contem-
plation of the Passion, wherein
appeares both the Divine and hu-
mane Nature of our Lord, is per-
fecter then that wherein we behold
his Godhead alone.

The sole Godhead gives light
in Contemplation: but the Man-
hood by example instructs in Acti-
on. Wherefore, as to Contemplate
and expresse, which is Contem-
plative and Active in one, is perfe-
cter then Contemplation by it self:
So the Contemplation of both
Godhead & Manhood in one (as
is found in the Passion,) containes
more perfection then that of the
Godhead alone, practised in Ab-
straction.

God is more wonderfull with-
out then within himselfe: For in
himselfe, hee's only great, immor-
tal, & impassible. But without him-
selfe

selfe hee's both great and little, immortall and mortall, impassible and passible. 'Tis a strange thing to see a Man through excessse of Love or some other passion carried without himselfe. But to see the same in God through his Love to us, is much more to be admired at, without Comparison. Yet, betwixt God and Man is this Dfference, that when Man is without himselfe, hee is not within himselfe: But God is both at once, All within and All without himselfe. His universall power, wisdome & goodnesse being absolutely without himselfe in his Manhood, and within himselfe in his Godhead. Besides, as tis a stranger thing that God should be without then within himself: So, 'tis more excellent to behold him without then within himselfe.

But, as in the practise of the Passion

sion, such a sweetnesse is hidden, as never any Will naturally tasted; so the Contemplation of the same discovers such a wisdome, as never any humane understanding comprehended. And as we can come no other way to the knowledg of this tast, but only by experience; so neither is there any possibility but by the same experience to imagine what a Wisdome it is. And therefore as the one hath such sweetnes in it as the world cannot beleeve; so the other inrolls such Mysteries and Divine secrets as Man can never imagine. The one comes by that infinite goodnesse infused into the Will through the practise and Union of the Crosse: The other by that eternall wisdome espoused to the Understanding by Contemplation of this Myserie. Daily are new Joyes of this goodnesse tasted: and endlessly new secrets

secrets of this Wisedome disclosed:
And both exhausted from this
fount of the Passion. For, as the
world can never conceive how 'tis
possible that a Man crowned with
thornes can expend so many de-
lights, or how the fellowship of
his sufferings can inebriate the
minde with such pleasures: so nei-
ther can it ever imagine how in so
vile and forlorn a Condition such
a height of Mysterie should bee
comprized. And as such wondrous
Joyes and Mysteries are grounded
in a solid staidnesse upon this
point, that that Man is God: So
on the other side our Not-finding
of those delights and secrets, ari-
ses from our drowisie wavering in
the same. And herein stands all
the Keeping-downe of our Mysti-
call buildings, and all the ruine of
our spirituall growth, because in
the Passion wee duely consider not
God

God and Man in the same person.
For, if there wee as verily found
God as Man, and knew both to
make but one onely person, wee
should not aspire to any higher or
loftier Contemplation, because
wee should then understand that
same to be highnesse it selfe. And
how can any deny the Manhood of
our Lord Jesus Christ to be the lof-
tiest Contemplation of all others,
when in the same hee can see no-
thing which is not God? It being a
Sea vast and spacious, wherein e-
very one may set saile more or lesse
according to his Vessells burthen.
So that all they that fall short of
the depths of the Godhead may
justly blame themselves for want
of capacity & Light, but never im-
pute the least defect to this sea of
the Passion boundlesse and infinite.
And therefore wee are to sticke to
the same as to the ultimate end, not

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as

as to a thing low and vile, but as to God himself high and glorious; For, as he that cleaves to this man, cleaves to God, so he that embraces his Passion, enjoys the highest good.

And surely, if in the Passion consisted not the most perfect and high Contemplation, then would not that great *St. Bon.* have placed it in the latter, as being higher then that of the Being of God and his Perfections, Attributes, Trinity and other Mysteries of his Godhead, saying, that Christ is the perfect Image of God naturally invisible, and that in this Contemplation we see the Manhood so miraculously exalted, so uneffably united by seeing both in one, the first and the last, the highest and the lowest, the Circumference and the Centre, A. and Q., the Caused and the Cause, the Creator and the Creature, *i.* the

Booke

Booke written within and without.

Since then this Contemplation of the Passion is higher and perfecter then all others ; I cannot but doubt that many are some wayes deluded, who aspire to the nakednesse and sole Contemplation of the Godhead, as to the more high and perfect : And that many more deceived in the same manner, presume thither though incapable, supposing that true abstraction, which yet is no more but a sleepey demission of Nature. And they rest in their Manly spirit, where they should rest in the Divine.

That therefore this holy Passion may be considered in this exercise, and drawn into practise, we must alwayes behold it joyntly with the Godhead, and the Godhead with it, by beholding alway before our eyes God crucified. For, as in the

244 *The Crosse of God is God.*

first part we do and suffer *That Gods Will may be done* ; So, in this this 3^d. we doe and suffer *That God may be,* i. that he may live and raigne in us. And as in our practise, the Will of God is almost alway conjoynd with his Passion, inasmuch as alway things adverse to nature are to bee accepted and pleasing rejected in the Active Life ; So in this, God is almost alway conjoynd with his Crosse, the same Rule of accepting and refusing being still to be followed. And as in the Active Life this Divine Will, Passion or Crosse and Affliction are one and the same thing ; So God and his Crosse are here also one. And as there we behold the Wil of God and Affliction or Crosse without Multiplicity, so here we are also to see God and his Crosse with one simple & the same sight. But, to determine precisely and in particular when any one is
fit

fit for this exercise, and when for each part thereof, that is indeed very difficult, I say not impossible, because of the many interpossible events, which may take away, lessen, or alter such fitnessse. For, first, tis considerable whether it be long time or short since his Conversion. Secondly, whether the manner of his Conversion be common & leaning on meere Reason, or usuall and extraordinary. Thirdly, whether naturally hee be of a constant minde, or light, sudden and unsetled. Fourthly, whether hot or luke-warme. Fifthly, whether simple or subtle. Sixthly, whether alone or under a Master. And according to these Conditions and fitnessses hee may enter upon these exercises, and passe along from one part to another. No other speciall rule can be assigned. Only in generall: The first part